







LORDS AND LOVERS
AND OTHER DRAMAS

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OTHER DRAMAS

BY

OLIVE TILFORD DARGAN

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LORDS AND LOVERS

PART I

Read at the Henry. Club -
 Church of the Henry
 Cleaveland -
 December 16, 1907.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

Wm. Suter	HENRY III, King of England
Prof. Hayes	EARL OF ALBEMARLE
Wm. Kaiser	EARL OF PEMBROKE
Wm. Allen	RICHFORD, son to Pembroke, afterwards Earl
" Hunter	ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
" Gibson	BISHOP OF WINCHESTER
" Hunt	CARDINAL GUALO
" Bradley	HUBERT DE BURGH, afterwards Earl of Kent
" Taster	SIR ROLAND DE BORN
" Carlson	STEPHEN GODFREY, a soldier
" Hunt	GREGORY, a captain
" Libby	BALDUR, GODRIC, soldiers
" Orson	ORSON, a servant
" Gersa	GERSA, an officer under De Burgh
" Kaiser	FRIAR SEBASTIAN
	LORD GOLY
	LORD DE VERE
Wm. Suter	MARGARET, a Scottish princess
Prof. Hayes	ELEANOR, Countess of Albemarle, wife of Albemarle
Wm. Allen	GLAIA, ward of De Burgh
" Suter	ELDRA, servant to Glaia

Lords and ladies of the court, bishops, barons, priests, citizens, soldiers, &c.

TIME: 13th Century

SCENE: England

ACT I

SCENE 1. *Room in the earl of Pembroke's castle. Pembroke in bed. Richford and Albemarle attending.*
Pemb's son.

Pem. The king has come?

Alb. He waits upon your grace

As a good servant; with demeanor speaks

True sorrow you are brought so low.

Pem. [*Stoutly*] Ha! Low?

Alb. Sir, but in body. Pembroke's mounting mind

Can never be struck down.

Pem. He's sad, you say?

Alb. In tears, your grace. He weeps more like a son
Than sovereign.

Pem. A son! Where is the son

Would weep for Pembroke?

Rich. Here, my dearest father!

Here are the tears would water thy affliction

Till it be washed from thy endangered body.

Here is the heart would give its younger blood

To make thine leap with health. Without you, sir,

I am no more than is the gaudy bloom

Of some stout tree the axe has brought to ground.

O, wilt forgive the many pains I've cost thee?

Pem. First touch my hand and swear by highest God
That you will serve the king.

Rich. O, slight condition!

I take this noble hand that ne'er was raised

'Gainst country, throne or God, and by that God,
I vow to serve the king.

Pem. For the last time
I'll trust and pardon you. If you make black
Your soul with violation of this oath,
I, safe beyond the stars, shall know it not,
Nor die again to think on 't. Men, weep not
That ye lack sons, but weep when your wives bear them!

Alb. I'll vouch for him, your grace.

Pem. Thanks, Albemarle.

Rich. Will you, my kindest father, say a word
To bring me to the graces of the king?

Pem. Ay, son.

Rich. Now, sir?

Pem. Nay, I'm not dying yet,
And wish to keep my last words for his ears.
There's holy magic in the passing tongue
That stamps its truth unrasurable. So
Would I grave Henry's heart.

Rich. But, sir——

Pem. I'll wait

My hour. Who comes with him?

Alb. The legate, Gualo,
To-day arrived from Rome.

Pem. And I not told?
Already I am dead. These ears, that kings
Engaged, are now contracted to the worm
Permits no forfeiture. Well, well, his message?

Alb. The cardinal assures us that the pope
Will cast his power with Henry. Though he loves
This praying Louis, well he knows our right.

Pem. The pope our friend? I thank thee, Heaven!
England, take up thy heart! Thou yet mayst hope!

[Enter bishop of Winchester]

Win. God save great Pembroke!

Pem. He alone can do it.
Lord Albemarle, and my new-graced son,
Will 't please you walk within?

Alb. We are your servants.

[Exeunt Richford and Albemarle, left]

Pem. Now, Winchester?

Win. You sent for me, your grace.
I have made haste.

Pem. Ay, you'd trot fast enough
To see me die.

Win. Nay, sir, I hope you've called
Me to your service.

Pem. So I have, my lord.
A task unfinished I must leave to you.
Here is the key to yonder cabinet.
Pray you unlock it . . . and take out the packet
Your eye's now on.

Win. This, sir?

Pem. Ay, that is it.
'Twas Henry Second, grandsire of this Henry,
Gave me that packet. Sir, you know the tale
Of princess Adelais who journeyed here
As the betrothed of Richard, Henry's son.
Alack, she never was his bride. Some say
That Henry loved her . . . I know not . . . but she
Returned to France, her reason wandering.
"If she recover," said the king to me,
"Give her this packet; should she die, break seal
And learn what you shall do." She did not die,
Nor can I say she lives, so sad her state.
Her age was bare fifteen when she left England,
Her face a lily and her eyes a flood;
She now must be midway her fifth decade,
A time, I've heard, when subtle changes work
Within the mind. A beauteous soul! O God,

Restore her now, or lift her e'en to thee!
. . . Take you the packet, and the king's command.
But first your oath. Deceit has sapped my faith
So oft I could believe the devil himself
Wears gown and mitre. Peter des Roches, will you
Be true?

Win. I swear by Heaven.

Pem. That is done,
As well as 't can be done. Call in my son
And Albemarle.

Win. My lords!

[*Re-enter Richford and Albemarle*]

Pem. Now let us talk
Of England. O, this fleet, this fleet, rigged out
By warlike Constance in monk Louis' name!
I see it nearing now, leaping the waves,
On, on, and none to meet it! Cowards all.
What do ye here, ye three, loitering about
A sick man's bed? A man almost a corpse.
I would not have a servant waste himself
To give me drink while England needs his sword.

Rich. My father lord, we have our men abroad
Rousing the country for a stout defence.
To meet the French with our poor ships were madness;
But let them land we'll give them such a rap——

Pem. What? Land your enemy? O, fools and cowards!
. . . I've given my life for England. Now you'll cast
My heart-dear bargain into Louis' hand
As 'twere a snood slipped from an easy maid.
Fool man! to puff his days out jousting Fate,
Who waits but his bare death to start her mock
Of horrid pleasantries. Then does she make
Dice of the miser's bones, carousal cups
Of the ascetic's skull, a hangman's scoff
Of clerics' prayer-fed sons; and proudest sires,

Who sentried their blue blood, peer back through dust
To see all Babylon pour to their line.
And now she'll bid my war-ghost eyes behold
The land held with my life become a field
For foes at holiday!

Win. Compose yourself, your grace.

Pem. Gualo has come, but where is he will set
This power its task, and play it for this isle?
I can not say that wisdom dies with me,
But I could wish more proof of sager mind
Than e'er I've had from this small audience.
Lord Bishop, you are left custodian
Of Henry's ripening youth.

Win. Nor shall I fail
To be your worthy heir in this high duty,
For still I shall consult with your great spirit,
Praying your ghost be mover of my deeds.

Pem. I've spoken to the king. He'll give you love
For love. But who shall be lord chancellor?
There's little choice. And yet there's one, De Burgh,
If camp and field could spare him——

Alb. Sir, a man
No older than our sons?

Pem. By your good leave,
Age is no patent to respect and place
If virtue go not with it. Whitened hairs
Make honor radiant, but vice thereby
Is viler still. Ay, there are some——

Rich. Peace, father,
And save thy strength for us.

Pem. Ah, son, I've been
A careless holder all my life, and still
With my last hour play spendthrift. Well, here be
Three friends of England—Gualo makes a fourth—
And trusting you I ease my bones to death.
[Enter attendant with a letter, which he gives to Pembroke]

Pem. [After reading] De Burgh! O gallant soul!

Now am I young!

With forty ships he'll meet the fleet of France!

I live again, for courage is not dead!

[*Sinking*] Nay—help—ah, I am gone. I'll hasten on
And plead in Heaven for his victory.

[Seems to die]

Alb. Ah . . . dead?

Rich. In truth.

Win. I'll go and tell the king.

[*Aside, going*] My joyful tears he will translate to grief,

And think I weep a friend's death, not a foe's

Whose only act of friendship was to die. [*Exit*]

Alb. How now, my lord? Does your good purpose hold?

Rich. It has the falling sickness, Albemarle,
And now lies low as earth.

Alb. Then set thy foot
Upon it that it rise no more.

Rich. 'Tis done.

Alb. What fools are they who think that dying men
Speak oracles to pivot action on,
When death's decay so blurs each fading sense
They know but darkly of the world about,
And of realities all plain to us
Build visions substanceless to gull our faith.
Grant that they do take note of things unseen,
'Tis with their faces to another world,
And what they speak is strange and ill advice
To us whose work is still 'mong men of earth.

Rich. You need not clear your way to me. I've not
A scruple in my soul would trip a gnat.
Speak out your heart.

Alb. You are great Pembroke now.
But Richford took an oath to serve the king.

Rich. And he—is Louis.

Alb. Till we find hour fit
To cast his yoke and take a sovereign
Of our election.

Rich. *Royal Albemarle!*

Alb. Here stand we then. De Burgh we count as dead.
Le Moine has orders to strike off his head
Soon as he's taken. Now we get the king
To Dover fort, on pretence to defend it.
There the besieging French will take him prisoner,
And ship him straight to Calais—or to Heaven.

Pem. [*Half rising*] Devils! dogs! beasts!
Now these devoted bones
Will never lie at peace in English earth.
My country! Must the foreign foot be set
Once more upon thy neck, and thine own sons
Pour sulphur to thy wounds? The king! the king!
What, vipers, do you hear? Call in the king!

Alb. We must not, sir.

Pem. Ho, here! The king!

[*Rises from bed, starts forward and falls back speechless.*

Enter Henry, Gualo, Winchester, and attendants.

*Albemarle and Richford stand together. Pembroke
dies pointing to them and gazing at the king]*

Hen. My lords, what does this mean?

Alb. This noble man
Wished much to say a word of grace for me
And his forgiven son. Alas, black death
Has stolen the balm that might have eased our way
Into your heart.

Hen. Fear not, my lords. I'll trust you,
Even as he wished. [*Kneels by bed*]

O, Pembroke, couldst thou leave me?

[*Curtain*]

SCENE 2. *Before Dover castle. Night. Hubert de Burgh walking and listening.*

Hub. But forty ships! But forty slit-sailed drabs
Of storm and watery danger to meet all France
Fresh-winged upon the sea! And yet no word
Nor stir of help. Methinks were I the king,
Or Pembroke with his power in my mouth,
Each English road should be ablaze to-night
With swift flint-striking hoofs. Now to our shore
Puffs up the wave may prove oblivion's maw,
And drink these Dover cliffs as they were sands,
Yet England sleeps, with one lone heart at watch.

[Sound of horse approaching] Nay, two, for Roland
comes.

[Enter Roland de Born, dismounted]

Rol. You, Hubert?

Hub. Ay.

You bring no aid?

Rol. The king is powerless.
Pembroke is dead. The barons to covert slink,
Saying their loyalty binds them to fight
No farther than the shore. The bishops smirk
Beneath their mitres, roll their eyes and cry
"God and great Rome, deliver us!" which means
Deliver us to Louis, king of monks
And darling of the pope.

Hub. And Albemarle?

Rol. Stands by the king, and ready with his men
To meet the foe on land, but not a soul
Will send to sea.

Hub. Dissembler! Well he knows
A victory on the sea means England lost,
So many traitor hearts will league with France
And sell their country for one castle more.

Rol. What now? We've little time. 'Tis almost day.
The moon is down, and the raw, rising air
Sucks in approaching light. What must be done?

Hub. The Cinque Ports yield me forty ships.

With these

I'll meet Le Moine.

Rol. O, Hubert, Hubert!

Hub. Ay,

My men are all aboard and waiting me.
The garrison I leave to you. Hold it
For honor and the king, nor yield to save
So poor a thing as my unlucky head
Should I go foul at sea. You'll be the first
The victors will besiege.

Rol. My friend!

Hub. Tut, man,

The sea's a good safe bed. Come in. Some wine
Will take the night-chill from your blood. In, in!

[*Exeunt. Curtain*]

SCENE 3. *Within the castle. Stephen, Baldur, Godric, and
other soldiers talking and drinking.*

Ste. [*Draining his glass*] As good liquor as ever wet
an oath since Noah was a vintner.

Bal. Vintner? An you put him in the trade the bishop
will have you up for it.

Ste. A groat for your bishop, and that off your grandam's
eyes! I'm no little king Henry pulled to mincemeat by
his bishops and barons. "I'll take off your mitre," roars
he to his bishop. "An you take off my mitre, I'll clap on a
helmet, by the lord," says my bishop. "I'll have your
castle!" shouts he to his baron. "An you take my castle,
I'll give you London tower," says master baron. Ay,
and he would, with the keeper thrown in.

Bal. And you too, if you bite not a bit from your tongue.

Ste. By the mass, I'll drink the king's ale, and I'll take the king's money, but I'll fight for none but Hubert de Burgh!

God. And he for the king—so you.

Ste. I care not how you make it. De Burgh is my master. I'll fight for him and with him and after him, but I'll wear a red sword for no bishop or baron or little king Harry in Christendom!

Bal. That may be so with more of us than you, but stop your mouth with good ale and let words alone.

Ste. And I'll go with him to the French court and pull Louis off the king's stool!

[*Sings*]

Hear, boys, hear! O, hear our captain call!

We'll away, boys, away!

For the love o' the sword and the love o' the money,
We'll on to the wars, my brave fellows all,

An they take our Jack they will leave our Johnny.

Away, boys, away!

[*Enter Hubert and Roland*]

Hub. What cheer, my men? A fair morning for brave hearts. Can you keep this castle for me till I've had a bout at sea?

A soldier. That we can, sir!

Ste. I'll go with you, sir, by your leave. The castle will wait for us, I give you my word, sir.

Hub. You have seen the bottom of your glass too often to-night, Stephen.

Ste. God bless you, sir, there's where a soldier keeps his oath to serve God and his country, and he can't look it over too often. Take me wi' you, sir, and I'll prove you who lifts his glass the highest will wave his sword the longest. [*Kneels*] I was your father's soldier, sir, and hope to die yours.

Hub. Nay, I must leave trusty souls behind me. Let those who love me least fight under my eye, but I'll trust my good Stephen around the world.

Ste. [*Rising*] Ay, sir! Rain arrows, hail bullets, we'll keep the castle against all weather!

Hub. [*Presenting Roland*] Then here's your brave captain. Follow him now, and farewell, good fellows—farewell, all!

[Soldiers start out slowly, following Roland]

An old soldier. [*Turning*] But you'll come again, sir?

Another. Ay, we'll see you back?

Another. An you come or come not, I kiss my sword to you, Hubert de Burgh, the bravest knight in all England!

Hub. Why, my hearts, would you start the liquor in my eyes? I go where there's brine enough. Twelve hours' sail with fortune will bring me back—but if I come not, remember your king!

[Exeunt soldiers]

They know 'tis death—they know 'tis death.

And what

Is that? We are all guests in God's great house,
The Universe, and Death is but his page
To show us to the chamber where we sleep.
What though the bed be dust, to wake is sure;
Not birds but angels flutter at the eaves
And call us, singing.

[Enter Gersa]

Gersa, what success?

Ger. The bags are all aboard, sir.

Hub. And portioned to every vessel?

Ger. Ay, sir.

Hub. Well despatched?

Ger. The men heaved as though the sacks held all the pope's treasury and they were to take their pay out of it.

Hub. Yet they found the contents not so heavy as gold, I hope.

Ger. Nor so light as feathers, sir.

Hub. But I pray they'll fly as well, and more to the purpose. Aboard with you now. I'll not be long behind you.

[*Exit Gersa*]

If this, my careful stratagem, should fail,
 God help the friendless boy on England's throne!
 Now Pembroke's noble strength must e'en to coffin;
 And Isabel across the sea cares not,
 But happier in a gentler husband's love
 Takes little thought of John of England's heir,
 Who has his father's beauty, not his heart,—
 Just so much of that proud and guilty blood
 As makes him kingly nor corrupts his own.
 . . . But, come, my soul! Prepare thee for a world
 Of rarer breath, lest thou too rudely go
 To th' high conclave of spirits. Father?

[*Enter friar Sebastian*]

Fr. Seb.

Son,

Art ready for the sacrament?

Hub.

I lack

A prayer of thine to make me so. Give me
 Such blessing as you'd lay upon me were
 Death couchant for my heart, and on my brow
 Drop thou the holy unguent that doth fit
 The body for the last touch of the soul.

Fr. Seb. My love is to thy mortal frailty bound,
 And first I'll bless thee as an earthly father,
 Praying that thou mayst smite thine enemies.

[*Re-enter Roland*]

Rol Your pardon, Hubert. Lady Albemarle
 Is here, and begs for instant sight of you.

Hub. My sister? I will see her.

[*Exit Roland*] Wait you, father.

The world must still intrude on Heaven's affairs.

[Exit friar through large folding doors rear as lady Albe-
marle enters left]

La. Alb. Brother! Is Glaia here?

Hub. She is. But why

This eagerness?

La. Alb. My lord says that you go
To meet the French. Is 't true?

Hub. In one hour's time
I count myself at sea.

La. Alb. Then what—O, where
Shall I hide Glaia?

Hub. Hide? Is 't evermore hide
That spotless maid, born but to be a star
To human eyes?

La. Alb. Nay, born to be my shame,
And constant, killing fear!

Hub. She will be safe.
Roland de Born, who now will guard this castle,
Holds Glaia as the heart in his own body.
Ay, she is safe,—but if the danger nears,
She'll be conducted back to Greenot woods——

La. Alb. Roland de Born? What knows he?

Hub. Only this,
That Glaia, weary of skies, rests foot on earth.

La. Alb. He does not love her, Hubert? Say not that!

Hub. Thy daughter is so honored.

La. Alb. No!

Hub. She has
His noble love, and he my happy wish
That he may make her wife.

La. Alb. Then thou art false,
And I look on my grave.

Hub. What, Eleanor?

La. Alb. You know my place, and how I queen the
court,

A virtuous mark that lords point out to wives,
 Bidding them walk as Albemarle's good dame.
 Now let me take my seat on the lowest step,
 And none too humble to mock me going up.

Hub. What 's this to do with Roland's love for Glaia?

La. Alb. O, let them scorn! 'Tis nothing! But my
 husband—

Brother, I never dreamed thy cruelty
 Would give me to his vengeance.

Hub. Cruelty?

La. Alb. O, see me at his feet—bleeding and broken—

Hub. Not while I wear a sword! But how have I
 Disturbed thee? What have said? I've threshed my words,
 But find no devil in them.

La. Alb. O, this Roland,
 If he wive Glaia must ferret out my shame—
 Pry her life ope—who is she?—whence she came?—
 Till all my secret blushes 'fore his eye.

Hub. Though he learn all, thy honor in his breast
 Is safe as gem that at earth's centre burns.

La. Alb. Nay, I'll not live! You know not Albemarle!
 He'll scourge me through the court in rags to match
 My tattered virtue,—then the rack—fire—screws—
 The Scotch boot—O, the world's not dear enough
 To purchase so. I will not live!

Hub. I swear
 That Roland cares so much for Glaia's birth
 As to be glad she's born. And at my word
 He will receive her questionless and dumb,
 Nor ever doubt, or weigh his promised faith.

La. Alb. Why, is there such a man in all the world?

Hub. He sees her as one looks upon a rose,
 And thinks not of the mould that bore it, or what
 The tale that dews and winds could tell.

La. Alb. 'Tis strange.

Hub. As strange as truth.

La. Alb. I must—I do believe you.

Hub. And bless his suit?

La. Alb. Ay, let him wed her straight.

What waits he for? Let her be lost in him,
This rare, this unmatched wonder of a man,
And I will cast this shadow from my life,
Heave off the weight that seventeen years I've borne,
And walk the lighter, for I've known what 'tis
To step high 'neath a load. O, let them wed
As soon as may be, Hubert. Why not now?

Hub. He waits to win her heart.

La. Alb. Cares he for that?

You can command her, Hubert.

Hub. But will not.

She is a plant of Nature's tenderest love,
And must be won to bloom by softest airs,
Else shall we risk the gentle life and see
No buds unfold.

La. Alb. I understand her not,
Nor try. She is a part of strangest days,
That like to burning dreams bewilder as
They scar the recollection. She's more kin
To those strange creatures of the wood that peeped
About my shelter when she lay a babe
Than to my blood. Yet she is mine—my daughter.

Hub. Will you not see her?

La. Alb. No.

Hub. You will find her up.

La. Alb. Why should I see her? Give a stranger's kiss,
And hear her stiffly say "Your ladyship"?
If she would love me!

Hub. Do not weep.

La. Alb. You think

I do not suffer.

Hub. I've no wish to think so.

La. Alb. I'm nearly mad at times! But I must go.

Hub. [*Hesitating*] How is—the princess?

La. Alb. Margaret? O, well,

But every day more full of starts and whims.

Last night the king was with us——

Hub. Ah, the king?

La. Alb. She gave him stinted welcome. Then my
lord

Came in with news of the advancing fleet,

And danger to the throne, concluding with

Your aim to put to sea, and at that point

She swooned quite prettily and pleased the king.

Hub. She swooned?

La. Alb. Most properly, the king being by
To know it was for him.

Hub. O—ay, for him!

La. Alb. Who else? I hope they'll soon be wed.

Hub. Be wed?

Henry is young.

La. Alb. But old enough being king.

And Albemarle is pressing for the marriage.

'Tis now ten years since Margaret came from Scotland

To be his charge. A pretty child—do you

Remember? But now grown from beauty, pale

And fanciful. You've seen the change?

Hub. To me

She never changes but to show herself

More beautiful.

La. Alb. You have not seen it? Pah!

Now I must go. Good brother, fare you well.

You've given me comfort. [*Kisses him*]

Hub. Farewell, Eleanor.

[*Exit lady Albemarle*]

Art gone, my sister, and no word of love

For one who looks on death? It is the fear
That keeps so constant with her makes her hard
And unlike woman—unlike Margaret.

. . . Last night the king was with her—and she swooned.
But not for him. By Heaven, 'twas not for him!

[Sits by table, bowing his head upon it]

O Margaret! Not one dear word? Not one?

[Enter Margaret, veiled]

Mar. Ah! *[Steps toward him, throwing off her veil]*

Hubert?

Hub. *[Starting up]* Princess! Here? You here?

Mar. Couldst think I'd let thee go till I had said
"God save thee" to thy face?

Hub. You risk too much!

Mar. Risk, Hubert?

Hub. O, what have you done?

Mar. What done?

Hub. The king will think——

Mar. The king will think as I do,
That 'tis most natural to pay adieu
To friends.

Hub. But Albemarle——

Mar. Approves our friendship.
I do not understand.

Hub. Yet you came veiled.

Mar. 'Twas early—and the air was pricking chill.
I—thought—do you go soon?

Hub. That you should come!

Mar. Soon, Hubert?

Hub. Ay, at once.

Mar. At once. Why then,
Farewell.

Hub. Stay! Ah—I mean—why did you come?

Mar. My soul! I think I came that you might wish
Me back again. Was it so wrong of me?

Are we not friends? And if I came in hope
To ease adieu with unction of a tear
I know none else would shed——

Hub. O, Margaret!
Pray God that I deserve this! Now I go
So light I'll hardly need my ship's good wings
To bear me.

Mar. The earl doubts not your victory.
How many ships go with you?

Hub. All we have.
The ports hold not a single vessel from me.

Mar. And the enemy's? I hope they are enough
To make your victory noble.

Hub. I've no doubt
They count up bravely.

Mar. Not too many, sir!

Hub. The battle will not shame me.

Mar. But how many?

Hub. As yet we have no word but rumor's.

Mar. Ah!
Tell me you'll win.

Hub. Then help me by not doubting.

Mar. I must not doubt—for if—I did——

Hub. What then?

Mar. Nay, I'll not stay to tell you. I must go.
I keep you from the battle and your fame.
You have forgiven me my morning ride?
Faith, but you frowned!

Hub. I thought how many eyes
Were on the king's betrothed.

Mar. Choose better words,
My friend. I am not yet the king's betrothed,
And I—had you the time——

Hub. Nay, all my life
Is yours.

Mar. Hear then. I will not wed the king.

Hub. A princess can not choose.

Mar. Then I'll not be

A princess!

Hub. Margaret!

Mar. A princess? Nay,

I'll be no more a woman, if that means

To cage my soul in circle of a court

And fawn on turn-key humor for my life!

Scotland is lost to me. I'll not go there

To meet my dangerous brother's wrath. No, no!

But there are forests—I can fly to them,

And dig my food from Nature's generous earth,

Thrive on her berries, drink from her clear streams,

Sleep 'neath the royal coverlet of her leaves,

And make some honest friends 'mong her kind creatures

That we call dumb because, forsooth, they speak

By eye and touch and gibber not as we!

. . . So silent, sir? Come, will you not advise me? . . .

There was a day before the day of kings

When maidens looked where'er their hearts had sped

And found them mates who had no need of crowns

To make them royal, and such a day the world

May see again, but I, alack, must breathe

The present time, and crave the help of state

And craft and gold to get me married! O,

The judgment angel gathering up our clay

Will know this period by its broken hearts!

. . . Hast not a word? Now should I wed the king?

Hub. He is a gentle youth, and in your care

Would blossom brave in virtues.

Mar. Nay——

Hub. All hope

For this poor land lies in your grace.

Mar. Ah, Hubert,

Where is there woman strong enough to save
Fair Henry from his flatterers? Not here.
Wouldst cast me to the pool where he must drown?

Hub. Where canst thou hide thy beauty, Margaret?
This is wild talk of forests. Where couldst flee?
What land would shelter thee from England's love
And Scotland's rage? My own—my Margaret—
Where could we go?

Mar. O, Hubert, we?

Hub. I'm mad.

Peace to thee, maiden. I go to my ships.

Mar. Forgive me! I'll be gone.

[*Re-enter Gersa*]

Hub. What! Not aboard?

Ger. Your pardon, sir. We have confirmed reports
The French outnumber us by triple count.
Eighty large ships, the double of our own,
Besides two score of galleons and small vessels
That in themselves would match us. And 'tis sure
Le Moine, the pirate, leads the fleet.

Hub. Are all

Now ready?

Ger. Ay, we wait for you.

Hub. Grant me

A bare half hour—no—not so much. I shall
O'ertake you ere you reach your ship.

[*Exit Gersa. Hubert turns to Margaret and finds that
she has fainted*]

My lady!

Is this, too, for the king?

Mar. [*Reviving*] You shall not go!

Hub. I must—and now. Let me but press your
hand——

Mar. No, no, my lips! Hubert, let us be true.

\ Death watches now and will report all lies

To Heaven. Now I must see you go from me, {
 Out of my eyes as stars go from the sky,
 And never, never see you come again,
 Let me once hear you say you love me, Hubert,
 And all the years that I must weep for thee
 I'll keep the words as a sweet golden bell {
 To sound whene'er my ears want music. }

Hub. Thou art the king's.

Mar. Nay, I will lay my head
 Upon the block, ere pillow it by his.

Hub. Then we'll be mad together, Margaret.
 To go one step in this is to go farthest.

Ah, yesterday I saw a knight I loved
 Sink in his blood; but when he called the name
 Of his dear bride, and died as it made sweet
 His lips, I thought of you and envied him.
 And now, so soon, his fortune is my own.

[*Calls*] Come, father! [*To Margaret*] Art afraid?

Mar. Ah, yes, afraid
 That I may lose thee!

Hub. Is it hell, or Heaven?

[*Re-enter friar Sebastian*]

Good father, when two souls have kissed so close {
 They in each other lose the form of self,
 And neither body knows its own again,
 Wouldst join them mortally, that being one
 They can not go amiss? }

Fr. Seb. If they be free,
 My son, to take the vows.

Hub. Thou knowest us.

Fr. Seb. I've blessed ye both as children.

Mar. I am free
 By my soul's right, and though a princess born,
 Here choose my lord.

Fr. Seb. My daughter, thou art noble,

And must be written fair though envy keep
The beadroll of thy faults, but 'tis poor rank
Not thee stoops to this choice.

Mar. I know it, father.

Though it should cost my fortune, name and place,
I'd give them all to be his wife one hour.

Fr. Seb. Then, by my sacred vows, as I believe
Love is from Heaven, and 'tis God himself
Who fosters its sweet growth through all the blood
Till action, thought, yea, life, do hang upon it,
I'll bind ye in the dear eternal bonds,
And bless your union with the holy feast.

Come in with me. [*Exit, rear*]

Hub. [*Embracing her*] 'Tis Heaven, Margaret!

[*Curtain*]

ACT II

SCENE 1. *Within Dover castle. ~~Same room as in act first.~~*
Enter Glaia followed by Eldra.

Eld. O, my lady, up all night, and now 'tis barely day you must be going!

Gla. My good Eldra, you would teach my shadow constancy, for you follow me without let or leave from the sun.

Eld. I follow not you but my orders, mistress. Sir Roland says that I must not leave you.

Gla. The gates are all locked. Does he think me a bird to fly over the walls?

Eld. That he does! The bonniest bird that ever sang in Greenot woods. Isn't Sir Roland a man, my lady?

Gla. By his cap and feather, I should not doubt it.

Eld. But a man you may look at, my lady!

Gla. Pray God I may, madam, for 'tis sad to be young and blind.

Eld. Ay, but when I look at Sir Roland I could sing again the song that got me a husband.

Gla. What song? I think you got him with your fair face and honest mind, and he took the song by way of grace with meat.

Eld. True, mistress, I was a fair, canny lass over the border.

Gla. And a fair, canny dame you are now, Eldra. But what was the song?

Eld. It was back summat ten jaunts o' the sun from Lammas to Lammas. I was standing on the rock hills over Logan frith wi' the green woods behind me an' lookin' out to sea. The waves were runnin' high, and the brine in my face gave me such a spirit that in a minute my bonnet was off and I was singing at the top of my voice—

O braw, braw knight, come down the glen
And awa' to kirk wi' me!
And Heaven send us seven stout sons
To fight for our king on the sea!

It's a long ballad, but it's out o' my mind now, and who should come up behind me but my man that was to be, and 'twas set then and there we must go to the kirk come Sunday. Ay, it got me a husband, but never a son, for only six months away he was drowned at sea—the very sea that I'd sung so brave t-to——

Gla. Don't cry. He will come sailing back some day with a fortune in his pocket. I don't believe he was drowned.

Eld. I care not what's in his pocket, ma'am, if he bring me love in his heart.

Gla. That he will, I am sure. Where is Orson?

Eld. Bathing his knees in gooseoil, my lady. You kept him at prayers all night for Sir Hubert.

Gla. Why, did we not share his watch?

Eld. Yes, mistress, but when you fell asleep we had not the heart to wake you.

Gla. O, ho! I fell asleep, did I?

Eld. I should hope you did, my lady. For my part I winked but once, and when I woke up you were——

Gla. Asleep?

Eld. No, but you were praying so chipper that I knew you were just at it.

Gla. O, false woman! Do you think I could sleep when Hubert is on the sea? Call Orson to me.

Eld. Orson! Orson!

[*Enter Orson, walking stiffly*]

Gla. Why, Orson, you carry as much dignity as a watchman that has just let in a duke.

Ors. Mock not affliction got in your service, my lady.

Gla. My service? When did I tell you to sleep all night on your knees?

Ors. Sleep? Sleep, lady?

Gla. Ay, sleep. You are a knave. Bring me my lute.

Ors. [*Muttering*] Sleep! There's thanks for you!

[*Exit*]

Eld. Mistress, you must not play your lute here. The king's men are not like Sir Hubert's, and your voice will quick tell 'em there's a bird in the bower.

Gla. I am not afraid. What are men but creatures like ourselves?

Eld. Like ourselves? La, my lady!

Gla. There's no harm in them. You are a foolish dame.

[*Re-enter Orson*]

Eldra
[*Taking lute*] Good Orson, I am sorry if your knees are stiff. You may have the unguent that Sir Roland brought me from Palestine. Go, Eldra, and get it for him.

Eld. [*Aside*] An I give him not gooseoil with a dash of cinnamon, I'm no good servant to my mistress.

[*Exeunt Eldra and Orson*]

Gla. I do not like this castle with Hubert away. Sir Roland makes it a prison. If I could get out I should try to find my way to Greenot woods. The doves are nesting now, and the little brown fawns are specked with snow.

[*Plays lute and sings*]

O, lady, let the roses blow
In thy pale cheeks for this—
That I may to that garden go
And pluck them with a kiss.

My roses are all plucked, she said,
No more shall ever grow,
For cold is he and low his head
Whose dear love made them blow.

Then lay she down where slept her lord
Upon the silver heather;
Then sighed the knight, nor said he word,
But left the twa together.

[*Enter the king, dressed in black. He gazes at Glaia*]

Gla. What is your name, boy?

Hen. Henry.

Gla. Henry? That is the king's name. Are you his soldier?

Hen. I fight for him.

Gla. Ah, me!

Hen. Is it not brave to fight?

Gla. But kings are wicked
To buy their kingdoms with their subjects' lives.
Two days ago they brought a noble knight
Into the castle, bloody and quite dead,
And when I cried, my Hubert whispered "Hush,
'Tis for the king." Hubert is now at sea—
Mayhap this moment dies—and for the king.
And 'twas last night I heard Sir Roland say
"We'll hold the castle till each man is down,"
All for the king. And now *you* fight for him.
I hate the king!

Hen. O, do not say that.

Gla. Why?

Hen. Because he loves you.

Gla. He has never seen me.

You're merry, boy.

Hen. But good kings love their subjects
Before they know them.

Gla. O! Is Henry good?

Hen. He prays to be so.

Gla. Let him pray, lest he
Grow old in evil like his father, John.

Who is your father, Henry?

Hen. He is dead.

Gla. Ah! But you have a mother.

Hen. Far away,
And one who loves me little.

Gla. Now I'll sigh
No more for parents, since I know that they
May die, or prove unkind. I have no kin.
But Hubert loves me.

Hen. Lady——

Gla. I am Glaia.
That is all I know, but Hubert says
Some day he'll tell me more. I do not care.
I love to be a mystery to myself.

Hen. [*Aside*] She's nobly born, and kept from her
estate;

But how should she be honest Hubert's charge?

Gla. What say you, Henry?

Hen. 'Tis so strange to find
An angel housing in this black-browed castle,
Converting war's grim seat to paradise.
Hast always lived here?

Gla. O, behind these walls?
No, I've a home deep in the happy forest.
I do not like this place—these huge black rocks

Piled up so high, with caves i' the ground, and holes
To shoot out arrows. I walk on tiptoe here,
Afraid I'll wake the ghosts that sleep i' the corners.
But in the forest I can shout and run,
And everything I wake will laugh and sing.

Hen. Where is this happy place?

Gla. I can not tell.

'Twas night when we came here, and Hubert says
That none must know the way. I wonder why.
Do you live in a castle?

Hen. When I'm not
At wars.

Gla. O me, I would not live in one
To please——

Hen. The king?

Gla. No, not to please the king.

Hen. If he were lonely, Glaia?

Gla. Lonely? O,
He is to wed the princess Margaret.
Are you not glad? He'll not be lonely then.
She's fair and good, they say.

Hen. But not as you.
Her princess feet like well the solid earth.
She is a flower that sips of sun and dew,
But feedeth most from root-cups firm in ground;
While you are made of music, love, and air,—
A being of the sky—a lover's star,
Although he be a king. The grace of heaven
About your beauty plays, and drops as soft
Upon my eyes as light from the lark's wing.
But I must leave you now. Sweet, take this gift.

[*Gives her his jewelled belt*]

And know my name and place are worthy yours,
Though you should be a princess, as I think.
See, here's a jewel in this belt. I dare

To part with it, though wise men say my life
Is safe but when I wear it. 'Tis the stone
Of Wales, and blessed by magic of the seers
That in that country dwell.

Gla. Then keep it. Ay,
You must.

Hen. No, no! I have a fear some harm
Will touch you, me away. Keep you the charm,
And I will take your lute. In lonely hours
I'll touch the chords and think thou'rt listening.

[*Exit*]

Gla. A lovely boy! O me, these dreadful wars!
Eldra's a goose to call the king's men rude.
I wish he had not gone. I'll play again
And see who'll come. Ah, now I have no lute.
No matter, I will sing.

[*Sings*]

O, sweet the day and fair the May,
But Love he laid him down to weep——

[*Enter Gregory*]

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Greg. A pixy sure!
Sweet apparition, wilt fly if I approach?
Then here I'll stand, and from this point remote
As frosty Hebrid from the golden East,
Adore thy seeming substance! Ah, no answer?
Advance then, valiant Gregory, and explore.
Flesh? 'S light, 'tis flesh! A very woman, too.
A silent woman. Heavenly miracle!
With lips like twin strawberries 'neath one leaf.
The very manner of them begs a kiss.
I' faith, they shall not beg.

Gla. You would not kiss me!

Greg. You wrong me, duck. Why, I'm a man of mirth.
A soldier, sweet. And would not kiss? Now, now!
You take me for a ghost—or starve-bone saint.

I am not padded—I fill out my coat
 And owe but for the cloth. A man, my chick!
 Shalt have a kiss.

Gla. O, help me, Eldra! Help!

[*Stephen runs in, seizes Gregory and shakes him about*]

Ste. [*Pricking him with his sword*] Shalt have a kiss,
 he shall! A man, my chick!

I fill my coat, I do!

Greg. Hold, sir! I am
 An officer of the king!

Ste. Why then, shalt have
 More kisses! 'S blood! I thought thee but a scrub.
 A king's man, sir, shall have more ceremony.

[*Pricks him around the room. Enter Roland*]

Rol. Stephen! Brawling here? You know the orders.

Ste. Orders, I take it, sir, don't count in such a case
 extraordinary.

Rol. Your extraordinary cases have become quite usual,
 Stephen.

Ste. Be you the judge, sir. This gay blood here was
 troubling the lady——

Rol. Glaia! Then he dies! [*Drawing his sword*]

Ste. Orders, orders, sir!

Gla. He did not touch me, Roland.

Rol. Touch thee? If he
 No more than looked at thee death is enough.
 But had he touched thee——

Gla. Art thou cruel, Roland?
 I thought thee gentle. Wouldst thou make me hate thee?

Rol. You shall not hate me, Glaia. [*Sheathes his
 sword*] Let him live.

But take him from my sight.

[*Exeunt Stephen and Gregory*]

Gla. O, Roland, now
 I love thee!

Rol. Love me, Glaia?

Gla. Next to Hubert.

Rol. O, next to Hubert.

Gla. And the boy.

Rol. The boy?

Gla. Henry his name is. Such a pretty youth!

He gave me this,—and see, this jewel here

Is all so precious that it guards the life

Of whoso wears it. He must like me well

To give it me. Dost think he likes me, Roland?

Rol. [*Aside*] O God, the king! . . . Give me the bal-
dric, Glaia.

I will return it, for I know the youth.

In truth, I've seen him wear this very belt.

'Twas wrong to take it, Glaia. He belongs

So wholly to the king that you can have

No portion of his love, lest he betray

Himself and thee. Go, get you ready, child,

To leave this place. For you 'tis full of dangers.

Gla. Back to the woods? O happiness! But I—
Ah, must we go so soon?

Rol. It was your prayer.

Gla. But then—I had not—strange! Why is it, Roland,
'Tis not so merry going as I thought?

Is 't not a little lonely in the woods?

And yet it never seemed so. Will you come
To see me, Roland?

Rol. Do you want me, Glaia?

Gla. O, yes, dear Roland! And you'll bring the boy? .
I want to ask if he will be my brother.

Rol. You must not see him. Go and get you ready.

[*Exit Glaia*]

O, wretched me, to love so frail a thing!

Fragile and pure, thou art not for this world,

Where the same winds that bring thee breath must blow

Thy gentle life out.

[*Re-enter the king*]

Sovereign liege,

Count it not boldness if I dare to guess
Your presence here. You come, my lord, to find
This precious property. [*Gives him the belt*]

I know 'tis prized,

And hold me happy that it met my eye
Before another's.

Hen. Gentle Roland, thanks.

I need not ask if you found aught with this
More precious still.

Rol. Nothing that majesty
Might without blushing claim.

Hen. Thank you again.

[*Aside*] I've found the lover! . . . Is there news from
sea?

Rol. Uncertain news, that I was on my way
To give to you. Report cries victory
For Hubert, but 'tis chance improbable
That he should win, so take a breath, your highness,
Ere you believe.

Hen. The lords must know of this!

Rol. Your majesty, I have a suit to thee.

Hen. A victory!

Rol. If you do hold him dear
Who, by report, has won this doubtful battle,
That saves your kingdom and sets fast your crown,
I beg you hear me!

Hen. Speak, but be not slow,
Good Roland.

Rol. Sire, De Burgh has enemies
Who seek his downfall, for his honesty
Stands rock-like 'tween the throne and treachery.
'Twas they who wrought to send him feebly forth

'Gainst odds so great they left no chance of life
Save by God's love and favor. If he wins,
The victor's garland and his king's reward
Will further urge their hate to villainy.

Hen. Who are these foes?

Rol. The earl of Albemarle,
Pembroke and Winchester.

Hen. My very staff!
What proof hast thou?

Rol. I've nothing for your eye,
But in my heart there is a testament
That makes me bold to name them. I would risk
All but my soul to save you such a friend
And virtuous servant as De Burgh. You may
Condemn me——

Hen. First, I'll watch these lords.
But be they false, where, where shall I find friends?

Rol. 'Mong those who fight your battles, sire, nor fear
To die to save a king.

[*Exit*]

Hen. [*Seating himself in an alcove*]
I see a king
Must take some thought to keep his crown on 's head.

[*Re-enter Stephen and Eldra*]

Eld. Dear man, you can't deny it! 'Twas you saved
my mistress. But for my good man drowned at sea I'd
love you, sweeting.

Ste. And if you love me it must be by way of kiss and
part, for my good wife is still in the world, I've reason to
think, and some day I shall run plumb into her bonny
white arms. But a kiss, my lass, with a penny to the
priest, can do a soldier no harm, and you'll always find
me obliging in everything except matrimony.

Eld. Out! Away! You old father Longbeard! You
Johnny Hump-back!

Ste. Hump! 'Tis the squint in your eye, my dearie! I'm as straight as a poplar in the king's court.

Eld. Squint, sir? May be so, for I'm thinkin' o' my braw handsome man, an' 'twould make a straight eye squint to see you standin' in his place, it would.

Ste. An' I'm thinkin' o' my bonny little girl, as plump and tender as a partridge at her first nest, and out upon you, my fine, fat waddler!

Eld. An my man were here you'd drop to your fours and go like a beast for shame, you would. The prettiest figure 'tween here and Jerusalem! He had an arm! He could sling a sword! And such a leg! Dick Lion-heart never shaped a trimmer stocking. Hair like a raven fannin' the wind! An eye like Sallydeen's! For all the world a black coal with a fire in the middle. No watery peepers like present company's. An his eyes were stars in heaven I could point 'em out!

Ste. O, my sweet wench that's a waitin' for me! When shall I see her comin' with her head up like a highland doe, an' cheeks as red as my grandam's nightcap? I think o' her now as she stood on the high rocks over Logan's frith singin' the song that made the sugar-water start in my heart. And straight I must gallop wi' her to the kirk—Hey, what's the matter, old lady?

Eld. Nothin'—nothin', sir,—just one o' my qualms.

Ste. Do you have 'em ordinary? A pity now. My lass, an she lived a thousand years, would not be qualmsy.

Eld. [*Aside*] 'Tis Stephen, my own man! And he doesn't know me! O, I am changed from his ain lassie! He despises me! Waddler! O!

Ste. Chirk up, old duck. When I find my lass——

[*Re-enter Orson*]

Ors. Mistress Eldra, what do you gabbling here and my lady calling you?

[*Exit Eldra with Orson*]

Ste. Eldra? By Pharo's ghost! Let me see—ten years. It might be—yes—her very complexion—the pert eye—the little foot—the canny twitch to her lips—and her man drowned at sea. Well, I'm pickled. She has built up such a Solomon's glory picture o' me that plain Stephen Godfrey will never get another chance. *He* had an arm! Ha! Did I? An eye like Sallydeen! A leg like Lion-heart! Ha! [*Struts up and down*] But now I'm father Longbeard. Well, I'll shave off this weeping willow tree anyhow.

[*Re-enter Eldra*]

Eld. Good sir, are you here yet?

Ste. [*Aside*] Good sir! Methinks I grow in favor. Ay, sweet madam.

Eld. [*Aside*] He's lookin' softer now. Well a day, this is a world. Here they brought me and the lady Glaia to make sure we would be safe, and now they're taking us back for the same reason. Ay me, and a lonely, dreary place it is we're goin' to, with never a civil gentleman like yourself to sit out the night wi' a stoop o' ale an' cakes o' my own raisin'.

Ste. My good madam, if you will give me the tip o' the road, I'll not be a slow traveller when the business of war will let an honest soldier course to his liking.

Eld. O, 'tis secret, sir. My lady is hid away for some reason of God or the devil, and I'll not be so false as to let a stranger on the track.

Ste. Am I a stranger, madam? Did not my good arm no more than an hour ago procure me warrant for better treatment? Come! As you say, there 'll be lonely times, and a discreet companion who knows how to keep his tongue behind his teeth will not come amiss on a rainy day.

Eld. [*Aside*] How can it be harm to tell my own man when the good priest said we were one flesh? 'Twill only be tellin' my own ears. Well, sir, if you'll swear by St.

Peter's thumb and the crucifix you'll never let anybody know——

Ste. By St. Peter's thumb and the crucifix—and your black eyes, too—I swear!

Eld. Then take the straight road to— O, I'm afraid!

Ste. Courage, my pretty! There's not a cricket to hear you.

Eld. The straight road to Greenot woods, and two miles in the forest where the brook crosses, ride up the stream half a mile to a tall red ash standin' alone, and three miles by the path to the right brings you to the place you'll find me. Now I've done it! No, don't thank me for bein' a fool.

Ste. Nay, a woman, dearie.

Eld. I must run to my mistress.

[*Exit Eldra, Stephen following*]

Hen. [*Coming forward*] Go, Stephen with the Lion's leg. You'll haste

If I be not before you. Am I bound
To Margaret? By others' mouths, perhaps,
But certain not at all by oath of mine.

[*Enter friar Sebastian*]

What holy gloom comes here? Friar Sebastian,
One time the counsellor to Isabel.

Do you not know me, father?

Fr. Seb. [*Kneeling*] Gracious king!

Hen. Nay, rise and bless me.

Fr. Seb. Hear, my sovereign.

This meeting is not chance. I sought thee here
To tell what palsies me to think on.

Hen. Speak,

Then think of it no more.

Fr. Seb. 'Tis said De Burgh

Has gained the victory 'gainst all expectance.

I know that he was sure he went to death,

Else had he never put unto his lips
The rose that bloomed for one so high above him.
But dreaded death is yet full gracious, sire,
And sanctions rights too bold for life to claim.

Hen. Did Hubert wrong me, father?

Fr. Seb. Alas, my king!

Hen. Come, drop your burden even to my heart
That I may know its weight.

Fr. Seb. Sire, in the hour
That he spent last on land, I married him
To a most noble lady.

Hen. Married? Ha!
Nor asked consent of me? Not one
"By your good leave, my king"?

Fr. Seb. If in my words
So soon you find affront to majesty,
I dare not tell you more.

Hen. Nay, I'll forgive him.
Remembering his service 'twere too stern
To make contention of his marriage.

Fr. Seb. Though he should banish all the woes of
England,
Make sorrow alien, and a tear unknown,
Yet has he wronged a king. Though happy mothers
Drop on their knees and let no hour pass by
Without its prayer for him, still has he wronged
A king!

Hen. Wilt never speak because you speak
So much?

Fr. Seb. Here let me lie, and pray your grace
For two long troubled hearts. When I have spoken
Then set thy foot upon my priestly head,
But spare them, spare them, sire!

Hen. Up! Rise, I say,
From this debasement. We shall take good care
To shield your holiness. Now speak!

Fr. Seb.

One word

Will tell you—one.

Hen. [*Taking a seat*] And how much time will 't take
To say that word?

Fr. Seb. It is the name of her
Whom knightly Hubert made his wife.

Hen. Is it

A long name, father?

Fr. Seb. [*On his knees*] It is Margaret.

Hen. [*Rising*] Of Scotland?

Fr. Seb. [*Covering his head*] Ay, my liege.

Hen. [*Aside*] Deliverance!

Rise, father, rise, and learn that even a king
Is noble enough to suffer and forgive.

Fr. Seb. Have I my ears? Are these your words, my
lord?

Or does some pitying angel alchemize
Them into sounds more fit to reach my weak
And trembling age?

Hen. You hear even as I speak.

'Tis true that Hubert pitched his love full high.
Good manners had not o'ershot the royal bow;
But take my word no harm shall come to him.

Fr. Seb. He'll need a friend, my liege, for dangers stride
In wake of this rash marriage.

Hen. Leave them

To me. I'll try my fledgling wit in this.

Where is the cardinal?

Fr. Seb. I' the western hall.

Hen. Here come the lords. But first I'll speak with
Gualo.

[*Exeunt Henry and friar Sebastian, left. At right,
enter Albemarle, Winchester and Pembroke*]

Pem. [*To Albemarle*] He has not yet confirmed you
chancellor?

Alb. No need, so short his reign.

Win. We should have news.

By this the battle's done. I wonder now
How far is Hubert's head on its long journey
To ocean's bottom?

Alb. May it please your grace,
We think 'tis best that you stay with the king.
If all desert him 'twill look foul in us,
And it will take an honest English face
To keep the people with us.

Win. True, my lord.
And I will stay with him, for I have gone
A little deeper in his heart than you,
And can best turn him to advance our plot.

Pem. While we ride forth to call men to defence—
In truth to give them hand and foot to Louis—
You wait here with the king——

Win. I understand.
And you not coming up, perforce be taken.
Then Henry may lay by his crown, or keep 't
To please his jailer's peeping mammals, or bribe
His turnkey for a slug of meat.

Alb. The jail
Where he must lie is small and needs no keeper;
For who go in so well contented are
They're never known to set foot forth again.

Win. Must go so far? Well, as you please, my lords.

[*Re-enter Henry, with Cardinal Gualo and attendants*] V ✓

Alb. God save your majesty!

Hen. My faithful friends,
Well met.

Win. Ah, still in black, my liege?

Hen. Why not,
My lord? When my poor father in the flesh
Was struck by death they dressed me in this hue;

And heavier cause have I to wear it now,
 When he who gave my soul its dearest light—
 My father in nobility above
 The blood or happy chance of birth—is gone
 To come no more.

Win. But, good, my liege, am I
 So little worth that with a strange misfit
 I wear his dignity?

Hen. The worthier
 You are to wear 't you'll teach me to regret
 His goodness lost, and be more pleased to see
 How I prize virtue dead, guessing thereby
 How dear is living virtue to my soul.

Pem. [*Aside to Albemarle*] Does he suspect?

Alb. 'Twould trouble us. There are
 Some captains in the fort would make a way
 For his escape.

Hen. You've had no news, my lords?

Alb. We yet wait word, but rest you easy, sire.
 Our fleet is safe and proudly bearing home.

Hen. Your faith is strong.

Alb. I have no doubt, my lord.

Hen. Were it not well to take this time to plan
 De Burgh's reward?

Alb. Ay, 'twere, your majesty.

Hen. What say you, my lord cardinal? You first.
 How should we grace his triumph? With what honor?

Gualo. None is too great. I'd place him next the
 throne.

What think your lordships?

Alb. As yourself, my lord.

[*Aside to Pembroke*] Best humor him.

Gualo. Then further I may speak.

The earl of Kent, who lately met his death,
 Has left no heir to his vast lands and name.

I think that God did so provide this place
 For honor of De Burgh. And more than this,
 Let him be made the great lord chancellor,
 And chief justiciary of this troubled realm.

Alb. [*Aside to Pembroke*] Agree. No matter. Gualo's
 eye is on us.

Win. You speak in happy time, lord cardinal,
 And we embrace your meaning heartily.

Hen. This easy payment of so great a debt
 Inclines me to forget the dangerous way
 De Burgh comes by his honor. We must keep
 That ever in our hearts, my worthy lords,
 Lest we grow jealous of his climbing fortune.

Alb. I hope we've memories, sire, and honest ones.

Hen. Well, to forfend the bating of his praise
 In my poor mind, I'll give a lasting proof
 Of how I hold him, and here forfeit right
 To Margaret's hand in favor of De Burgh.

Alb. My liege! The princess?

Hen. He is now an earl;
 And if I not complain, should any here?

Alb. But, sire——

Pem. [*Aside to Albemarle*] Submit! 'Tis only for an
 hour.

Alb. Pardon me that I thought to save you, sire
 From such dear sacrifice.

Hen. 'Tis fit we make it,
 And ask your fair approval, Albemarle.

Alb. And here I give it, my too gracious king.

[*To an attendant*] Whist! Are the horses saddled?

Att. Ready, sir.

[*Enter Gregory*]

Hen. Well, captain, well?

Greg. The princess Margaret
 And lady Albemarle are at the gates.

Alb. My countess gads for news of her brave brother.

Hen. A worthy quest. [*To Gregory*] See them refreshed
and lodged,

But bid them keep their chamber for a time.

[*Exit Gregory*]

Alb. [*To Pembroke*] Where are our messengers?
Can they be lost?

Pem. We should have heard by now. 'There's something
wrong.

[*Enter an attendant*]

Att. Your majesty, a messenger!

Hen. From sea?

[*Enter Gersa*]

Ger. The king! Where is the king?

Alb. Pray use your eyes.

Ger. [*Kneeling*] Your majesty!

Hen. Arise. Your message?

Ger. Sire,

Hubert de Burgh is at the port.

Alb. [*Aside*] How now?

Ger. With all his ships but five.

Pem. [*To Winchester*] But five? What's here?

Win. A witch i' the pot, your lordships.

Ger. For those five

There's fifty of the French gone to the bottom.

The rest are scattered wide, with crippled sails

Begging the winds for mercy.

Hen. Hark, my lords!

Divinity is here. [*To Gersa*] How was this done?

What know you of the battle?

Ger. When we met

The opposing fleet, we crept by swift and silent,

As to escape the fight. So near we coursed

We heard the jeers cast on us as we passed.

Well by, we turned, and with the wind at back,
Bore down full sail and grappled.

Hen. Here were men!

Ger. Then, sire, we cut the lime-sacks on our decks——

Hen. Lime-sacks?

Ger. Which gave out smarting clouds that rose——

Hen. Now here were fools!

Ger. Sire, you forget the wind.

The sweeping breeze took up the stinging lime,
Clearing our decks, but wrapping round our foes,
Blinding all eyes.

Hen. St. George!

Ger. 'Twas easy then

To hook our vessels to the great French ships,
Cut down their rigging and make way at will
O'er the wallowing crew.

Pem. Must we believe this tale?

Hen. Goes it against your wish?

Pem. Nay, but 'tis strange.

Ger. [*To Henry*] One hundred knights, eight hundred
officers,

Now wait their doom from you. Le Moine was found
Hid in his ship, and offered mighty sums
For his vile life, but Fitzroy closed the parley
By striking off his head.

Alb. What? Le Moine dead?

Hen. Why so amazed, my lord of Albemarle?
Did you not prophesy a victory?

Alb. True, true, my liege, but this surpasses all
My hope of it. Call it a miracle,
Not victory.

Gualo. Call it whate'er you will,
The Lord of Hosts was with this noble knight.

Hen. Not knight, but the right noble earl of Kent,
And for his life our grand justiciary.

[*To Gersa*] Thou art the mavis to a happy dawn.

Come, sing again. [*Talks aside with him*] *Gersa.*

Win. [*To Albemarle and Pembroke*] Your lordships, do
you ride?

Alb. What tone is this?

Win. A tone you'll tune to, sir.

Didst think me such a fool to stay and fall

With Henry into Louis' hands? Nay, I've

No wish to enter that small cell of earth

Which needs no turnkey, as you say.

Alb. What, sir?

Win. No, by the Lord! At the first castle where
You planned to stop I had my servants laid

To take you prisoners. It stirs my blood

That you should think I came to the bishopric

By a fool's wit. Now Rome is at my back,

And Henry king! But I'll make peace with you,

For I foresee a power in De Burgh

That warns me not to scorn even traitor strength.

Alb. Ay, we've no fear you'll let this sudden turn
Cut off our fortunes.

Hen. Come, my lords. Come, all!

We'll to the gates to greet the earl of Kent!

[*Exeunt. Curtain*]

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ACT III

SCENE 1. *Same as in act second. The king, Pembroke, Albemarle, Winchester, and other lords entering.*

Hen. The barons are assembling. On to London,
And call the council. I will join you there.
The revenues long promised shall be paid.
At last I am a king! Will post, my lords?
Night shuffles toward the morn.

Pem. You'll not forget
Your barons' suit, my liege.

Hen. Bring the petition.
I'll look at it, and then—will what I will.

[*Exit*]

Alb. What new-gown cock is this?

Pem. Will what I will!
And post you, sirs!

Win. The child that hung at knees
Now stands on the great shoulders of De Burgh,
And ports himself a giant o'er our heads.

Pem. Ha, so! This wedge of love 'twixt you and Henry
Quite thrusts you out.

Win. True, sir, but I've in mind
A plot will reach as high as Kent's new head,
Which, with your sworn and loyal aid, I'll push
To fullest stature.

Pem. You have my oath, my lord.

Win. And bond more sure—your spurring need to prick
Kent's swelling strength. But you, lord Albemarle—

The mighty Kent is brother to your wife,
Which now may count somewhat to lift your fortunes.

Alb. And when didst see my fortunes lie so low
As need the hoisting hand of friend or kin?
Nay, our ambitions swear us enemies!
I stand as free, my lord, as any here.

Win. Then hear my plan. You know I carry all
With the archbishop.

Pem. True. If Winchester would
Trust Canterbury to find way.

Win. Through him
We'll call this council in the name of Rome,
To kill the canker in the bud of peace
So lately ventured in the track of war,
And sound abroad that on this holy day
All weapons, armor, and gross sign of blood
Shall be laid by. I will persuade the king
His dignity is touched to be so quick
To fill his purse before he says his prayers,
And that 'tis wise to throw this goodly bait
To hook the common love. Now to this meeting
Let every prelate bear most righteous arms,
And every baron look well to his sword;
Then when the unsuspecting king appears,
Close companied no doubt by his new earl,
That mushroom minion we will dare accuse
And crop his power as we prize our safety.

Pem. But will not Kent oppose this swordless worship?

Win. Nay, he's afflicted with true piety,
And in the addling flush of high success
Is mellow with the good love of the world.
All men are honest now! Trust me, he'll bait
At what his judgment yesterday had scorned.

Alb. But what have we t' advance with show of right
Against him?

Win. Gualo brings the axe—although
He knows it not—that shall behead De Burgh.
'Trust me, my lords, and soon you shall know more.

Alb. Work as you will, for while he is in power
We are but puppets and I dance not well.

Win. I'll ride with Gualo, and begin our move.
Then on to Canterbury. Fare you well,
Till morning bring our bold designs together.

[*Exit*]

Alb. How, Pembroke? Seest the gull in this?

Pem. It needs

No second sight, my lord. The barons' arms
Outnumber all the feeble prelacy.

Alb. Thinks we'll stop with Kent when Henry stands
Defenceless 'fore us? Come! We too must ride.

Pem. Proud Poitevin! He plots to lose his head,
And give this land a king indeed!

Alb. My Pembroke!

[*Exeunt. An attendant opens the large doors, rear, lady
Albemarle and the princess Margaret enter*]

La. Alb. What! no one here? We have not seen a soul
But the poor fool who brought us food and wine.
I'll not endure it! Are we prisoners?
Mewed up these hours, when all about there's stir
As Fate changed hands and rumbled destiny.
Such clattering, shifting, revel, and "To horse!"
And we mope here like toothless dames that long
Have lost the world!

Att. Your ladyship, the king
Will see you here.

La. Alb. That's better. He shall beg
My pardon. [*Seats herself*]

Mar. How canst think of things so slight
When even now your brother may be lost?

La. Alb. I lose no kingdom with him. That's your theme,

And, lord, you don't neglect it.

Mar. [*Walking away from her*] O, for word!
Surely some word has come!

La. Alb. Would I were home!
'Twas you, my lady, put this journey on me
With prating of my duty to my brother.
But I know why you came.

Mar. O me, you know?

La. Alb. That does not mark me wise. A fool might guess.

Mar. O, I am lost! Dear lady, be my friend!

La. Alb. Why such a fluttering like a lass in folly?
The king was here, and 'twas mere wit in you
To follow after, making me your foil.

Mar. The king?

La. Alb. Ay, ay, the king! I understand
Your cry about my brother.

Mar. O!

La. Alb. Why such an "O!"
As though you'd swallow all the air i' the room
And kill me with vacuity.

Mar. Ah, madam!

La. Alb. You'll not have long to wait. He'll be here soon.

Mar. O, then you think he's safe?

La. Alb. I think he's safe?

Why should he not be safe?

Mar. Could I believe it!

La. Alb. His truest lords are with him. Albemarle
Himself is guard sufficient.

Mar. Albemarle?

He is not with your brother!

La. Alb. Brother? Pah!

How you draw off and on, as 'twere a shame
To love a king!

Mar. The king? Ah—I——

La. Alb. You ask

If he is safe, and I say safe enough,
Then drops the curtain of your modesty,
And you cry of my brother. Faith, you'll have
Me set about with this till I believe
My brother is the king of England!

Mar. O,

I'm wretched, wretched!

La. Alb. Patience! He'll be here.
True, 'tis most beggarly of him to lag,
But do not doubt he'll come.

Mar. He will not come.

O, never, never, never!

La. Alb. Foolish lass!

He can not stay away from you—his wife.
I might as well be out with 't soon as late.

Mar. O, lady—countess—if you e'er had need
Of gentle friends——

La. Alb. I know not what to do

With this strange piece of daintiness. Up, mistress!
How will you blush when Henry calls you wife,
If I, in play, can throw you on your knees?

Mar. Henry? God pity me! I am so racked!

La. Alb. Thou art a fool! Up, girl, there's some one
comes.

If 't be the king! Quick now, and smooth your face.
If he should wonder at this trace of tears,
I'll tell him why you wept.

Mar. You could not be
So cruel!

La. Alb. Cruel? How? 'Twill please him well
To hear you wept for him.

Mar.

For him?

[*Enter attendant*]*Att.*

The king.

La. Alb. Now, now, be still. He comes.[*Enter Henry*]*Hen.*

My duty to

My fair and honored guests. And my first suit

Is for your pardon that I come so late;

My next is still for pardon I must haste

Unto my third, and pray the lady Margaret

For word with her alone.

La. Alb.

I will withdraw,

My lord.

Hen. [*To attendants*] Attend the countess.*Mar.*

O! dear Heaven!

Hen. Are you at prayers, sweet lady?*Mar.*

Say I am,

Can women pray too much, who need so oft

The soft protection of the holy skies?

Hen. Have I been slack in care? Ah, Margaret,

Let youth excuse neglect the past may know.

In future——

Mar. O, thou hast been all I wish!*Hen.* All? All, Margaret? You've been in England

Ten years or more, and understand, I think,

Why you, a child, were sent unto our court.

Mar. My lord, when peace was made with Scotland's
king,

I was included in the arbitrament,

But am uncertain of the precise terms,

Though I dare think there was no mention made

Of marriage.

Hen.

There was a dowry paid

To English coffers.

Mar. Dowry? Ah, was 't not

A dainty serving of too humble pie?
Mere specious covering for indemnity
Proud Scotland would not pay by such a name?

Hen. May be, but 'twas held wise to join the kingdoms
By current of our blood.

Mar. True at that time
'Twas best for England to make closer ties
Wi' the north, but now is Scotland on her knees,
And you have naught to fear if you should choose
To set aside my claim.

Hen. The people's eyes
Are on you as their queen.

Mar. They will approve
As readily if you make other choice.

Hen. Then 't seems we both are free to follow love
In any court we please.

Mar. In truth, my lord!

Hen. And you reject me?

Mar. I am not so bold——

Hen. But, lady, in the world's mouth you will be
My cast off love, for who is there so wise
As to believe you would refuse a king?

Mar. I care not, sir! What is the world to me?
O, let it think as 'twill, if only——

Hen. Ah,
If only you are saved from me? But, madam,
I can not flip the world away as you.
It is my field of tourney where I joust
For fame and tender reputation.
I must not let men point to you and say
"See Henry's fool!" You shall be wed at once
Unto the lord most powerful in England
Who yet is free.

Mar. O, sir——

Hen. The earl of Kent.

Mar. Your majesty, be merciful!

Hen.

I am.

Mar. My knees were bending to you thankfully,
But you have changed their purpose to a prayer
For veriest pity. The earl of Kent, my lord?
An old, fierce man, who scorns the name of love?

Hen. To you he will be kind. I'll stake my crown,
Once wed to him you'll thank me for this day,
And swear you'd choose him yours from all the world.
He's in the castle now. I'll send him here,
For I'm in haste to bring the marriage on.
Wait here, sweet Margaret.

[Opens doors rear, and she passes slowly through]

Mar.

Kill me, my lord!

Hen. Now, by these tears, you'll live to bless me yet,
For from my heart I swear you're better wed
Than if you chose the king.

[Closes doors and calls attendant]

Ho, there!

[Enter attendant] I'll see

The earl of Kent. Bid him come in.

[Exit attendant] 'Tis cruel,

But right they should be punished who forgot
A king to please themselves.

[Enter Hubert]

Hub.

Your majesty!

Hen. How now, my chancellor? Methinks this day
Should mark the high note of thy singing heart.
But thou art gloomy, as weighing still thy chance
Against the flocking French. Canst not be merry
If Henry bids thee, Hubert?

Hub.

Ah, my lord,

I little thought to have escaped the foe.

Hen. Is that to grieve on, man? By Heaven, I'll think
It would have pleased you better to have sunk

My fleet and not the enemy's. Come, come!
What think you of the fortune we've assigned you?
Art satisfied?

Hub. O, 'tis not to be borne!

Hen. I' faith, thou'rt plain.

Hub. O, dear my liege, I mean——

Hen. Well, sir, I have another blessing for thee
May prove more welcome. How wouldst like a wife
Of royal blood? I will not tell her name,
But take my word that were my heart not bound
I'd look her way for fetters. She is fair,
Ay, perfect as the lily plucked to grace
A Lord's day altar, yet is proud enough
To hold your new-dropped dignities above
The mire and brambles of the common way;
And all this, sir, shall be your wedded wife.

Hub. My lord——

Hen. Nay, do not thank me. Ah, at last
I've touched the key of gratitude. Indeed,
My Hubert, you are pale with this new joy.
I almost fear to tell you she is there—
Within that room—and waiting your approach.

Hub. My royal lord—I beg——

Hen. No, not a word
Of thanks.

Hub. Not thanks! There's something else to say!

Hen. What, sir? Wouldst still play hang-lip at thy
fortune?

Hub. Hear me, your majesty!

Hen. Nay, I will speak.

Sir, I have done what monarchs seldom do,
Proclaimed my general worthy of his hire,
And paid it, too, and these sour looks from you
Are as the poisonous leaves in a fair garland
Marking it for decay. I've yielded much

Unto your noble merit, but no more
Will yield to your proud humor!

Hub. Hear, my lord——

Hen. No words! There is the door. Go in and find
The lady that must be your wife, or down
Come all your brave new honors to the ground!

*[Opens door and forces him through. Margaret is lying
on the floor, her face hidden]*

Hub. O, Heaven! 'Tis Margaret!

Mar. O! *[Leaps up, gazes at Hubert and runs to
his arms]* Hubert, Hubert!

[The king closes the doors upon them]

Hen. The midnight's past. I must away to Glaia,
And by the sunrise at her window sing.
My lords are set toward London. None shall know,
Save Cupid's self, how far I ride to-night.

[Curtain]

↑

ACT IV

SCENE 1. *Near the cottage in Greenot woods. Henry, with lute, singing.*

Ope, throw ope thy bower door,
And come thou forth, my sweet!
'Tis morn, the watch of love is o'er,
And mating hearts should meet.
The stars have fled and left their grace
In every blossom's lifted face,
And gentle shadows fleck the light
With tender memories of the night.
Sweet, there's a door to every shrine;
Wilt thou, as morning, open thine?
Hark! now the lark has met the clouds,
And rains his sheer melodious flood;
The green earth casts her mystic shrouds
To meet the flaming god!
Alas, for me there is no dawn
If Glaia come not with the sun.

[*Enter Glaia. The king kneels as she approaches*]

Gla. 'Tis you!

Hen. [*Leaping up*] Pardoned! Queen of this bowerland,
Your glad eyes tell me that I have not sinned.

Gla. How cam'st thou here? Now who plays Hubert
false?

Nay, I'm too glad thou 'rt come to question so.
'Tis easy to forgive the treachery
That opes our gates to angels.

Hen.

O, I'm loved?

Gla. Yes, Henry. All the morn I've thought of you,
And I rose early, for I love to say
Good-by to my dear stars; they seem so wan
And loath to go away, as though they know
The fickle world is thinking of the sun,
And all their gentle service of the night
Is quite forgot.

Hen. And what didst think of me?

Gla. That could you come and see this beauteous wood,
Fair with Spring's love and morning's kiss of grace,
You'd be content to live awhile with me,
Leave war's red step to follow living May
Passing to pour her veins' immortal flood
To each decaying root; and rest by springs
Where waters run to sounds less rude than song,
And hiding sibyls stir sweet prophecies.

Hen. The only springs I seek are in your eyes
That nourish all the desert of myself.
Drop here, O, Glaia, thy transforming dew,
And start fair summer in this waste of me!

Gla. Poor Henry! What dost know of me to love?

Hen. See yon light cloud half-kirtled with faint rose?
What do I know of it but that 'tis fair?
And yet I dream 'twas born of flower dew
And goes to some sweet country of the sky.
So cloud-like dost thou move before my love,
From beauty coming that I may not see,
To beauty going that I can but dream.
O, love me, Glaia! Give to me this hand,
This miracle of warm, unmelting snow,
This lily bit of thee that in my clasp
Lies like a dove in all too rude a cote—
Wee heaven-cloud to drop on monarch brows
And smooth the ridgy traces of a crown!

Rich me with this, and I'll not fear to dare
The darkest shadow of defeat that broods
O'er sceptres and unfriended kings.

Gla.

Why talk

Of crowns and kings? This is our home, dear Henry.
For if you love me you will stay with me.

Hen. Ah, blest to be here, and from morning's top
Review the sunny graces of the world,
Plucking the smilingest to dearer love,
Until the heart becomes the root and spring
Of hopes as natural and as simply sweet
As these bright children of the wedded sun
And dewy earth!

Gla.

I knew you'd stay, my brother!
You'll live with me!

Hen.

But there's a world not this,
O'er-roofed and fretted by ambition's arch,
Whose sun is power and whose rains are blood,
Whose iris bow is the small golden hoop
That rims the forehead of a king,—a world
Where trampling armies and sedition's march
Cut off the flowers of descanting love
Ere they may sing their perfect word to man,
And the rank weeds of envies, jealousies,
Push up each night from day's hot-beaten paths——

Gla. O, do not tell me, do not think of it!

Hen. I must. There is my world, and there my life

Must grow to gracious end, if so it can.
If thou wouldst come, my living periapt,
With virtue's gentle legend overwrit,
I should not fail, nor would this flower cheek,
Pure lily cloister of a praying rose,
E'er know the stain of one despoiling tear
Shed for me graceless. Will you come, my Glaia?

Gla. Into that world? No, thou shalt stay with me.

Here you shall be a king, not serve one. Ah,
The whispering winds do never counsel false,
And senatorial trees droop not their state
To tribe and treachery. Nature's self shall be
Your minister, the seasons your envoys
And high ambassadors, bearing from His court
The mortal olive of immortal love.

Hen. To man my life belongs. Hope not, dear Glaia,
To bind me here; and if you love me true,
You will not ask me where I go or stay,
But that your feet may stay or go with mine.
Let not a nay unsweet those tender lips
That all their life have ripened for this kiss.

[*Kisses her*]

O ruby purities! I would not give
Their chaste extravagance for fruits Iran
Stored with the honey of a thousand suns
Through the slow measure of as many years!

Gla. Do brothers talk like that?

Hen. I think not, sweet.

Gla. But you will be my brother?

Hen. We shall see.

Gla. And you will stay with me? No? Ah, I fear
All that you love in me is born of these
Wild innocences that I live among,
And far from here, all such sweet value lost,
I'll be as others are in your mad world,
Or wither mortally, even as the sprig
A moment gone so pertly trimmed this bough.
Let us stay here, my Henry. We shall be
Dear playmates ever, never growing old,—
Or if we do 'twill be at such a pace
Time will grow weary chiding, leaving us
To come at will.

Hen. No, Glaia. Even now

I must be gone. I came for this—to say
 I'd come again, and bid you watch for me.
 A tear? O, love! One moment, then away!

[*Exeunt. Curtain*]

SCENE 2. *A street in London. Citizens, friars, priests,
 pass in devout manner, some bearing crucifixes.*

First Cit. A day, a day, O, such a day!

Second Cit. 'Twill make a new page in our chronicles,
 the like ne'er read before.

Third Cit. Nay, when Saxon Edward came back from
 conquered Wales——

Fourth Cit. Ay, 'twas such a day of holy joy!

Second Cit. But not so general.

First Cit. And guards with arms kept order in the
 streets.

Third Cit. But now there's no authority abroad save
 that comes from our hearts. Surely the air is charged
 with drug of peace, and all men breathe it.

First Cit. Where meets the council? In the Tower
 chamber?

Third Cit. Nay, at Westminster palace.

Second Cit. That's three miles.
 We must push on if we would see them enter.

[*They move off*]

First Friar. How meanly does it speak for this proud
 world

That when the devil lays his weapons by
 And peace and love for one day reign o'er all,
 That it should wonder at itself, and cry
 "A miracle!"

Second Friar. In holy Edward's time,
 The nuns of Beda joined the council in

Concerted praise, for 'twas their prayerful fast
Kept Heaven with the king and gave us Wales;
And 'twas decreed that ever on such days
The nuns from this most blest and ancient abbey
Should with the great assembly kneel in praise.

First Friar. And so they do this day. The legate,
Gualo,
Sent invitation from the king.

Second Friar. The king?
This shows most well in him.

First Friar. If we haste on,
We'll see the sisters passing toward the palace.

Second Friar. Let 's forward then. God save so good
a king!

[*Exeunt. Curtain*]

SCENE 3. *The great hall in Westminster. Barons and
prelates assembled. Rich surcoats open, revealing arms.
Enter Henry and the earl of Kent.*

Hen. My lords, is this the faith you keep with kings?
Then Heaven save me from it! Was 't not your will
This day all arms should hang upon the wall?
Yet you come here as though the trump had called
To sudden battle.

Canterbury. Hear, your majesty,
The cause for which we laid upon our souls
This seeming perjury, and you'll forgive
As Heaven, calling it no stain.

Hen. Sir, let
The movers of this saintly shift speak first.
You, Winchester? You, Albemarle? Canst preach
The lie away?

Alb. My honored liege, these swords,

Surer than bended knees, bespeak your safety.
Knowing that treachery oft defames the ranks
Of those who shine as the highpriests of God,
I and my brother barons came thus armed,
Thinking it better so to break our oaths
Than that false hands should break your kingly staff.

Hen. For my protection then you do offend?

Alb. For that alone, my liege, we wear this armor.

Hen. And you, lord bishop, guardian of our person
By prayer and Heavenly counsel,—who even in war
Should wear no sword but that of righteousness,—
Confess you with these warlike blades thy Lord
Unable to defend his own?

Win. My liege,

'Tis in His name, to work His equal justice,
We bear these weapons, sacred by our cause.

[*Enter Gualo*]

Gua. Your majesty, the nuns of Beda's abbey
Would enter now.

Cant. The nuns? What do they here?

Hen. You know, your grace, since blessed Edward's time
'T has been their privilege on days of prayer
To join their voices with the court and state.

Cant. A privilege, but never yet in practice.

Hen. The more is England's shame that has not seen
For so long past a day of general prayer
And utter peace. Not in our time, nor John's,
Nor Richard's 'fore him, nay, nor greater Henry's,
Might Beda's sisters claim this privilege.
Lord Cardinal, bid them in. [*Exit Gualo*]

Alb. Nay, nay, my liege,

This is no place for women.

Hen. Are they not

Forever foremost in both prayer and peace?
By Heaven's King, they've more right here than we!

[Enter nuns, led by the abbess, who kneels before the king]

Hen. Rise, holy abbess.

Abb. Sovereign of England,
May Heaven's Sovereign protect thy youth!
And as thy hand is on thy sceptre laid
Feel there the Hand invisible from whence
Thy power comes, and know thy way as His.

[Henry bows his head. The abbess and nuns pass to a station apart and kneel]

Hen. Say on, lord bishop. Let us hear how priests
May break an oath and Heaven smile upon it.

Win. These papers, dearest liege, are warrant for us.
There is one here so steeped in guilt, the pope
Commands his sentence by our Spiritual Court;
And knowing crime so deep makes fierce defence,
We came thus armed.

Hen. Who of my subjects is so basely given
The pope must urge the sword of justice 'gainst him?

Win. He is so high in your esteem, my liege——

Hen. Now were he next ourself, our very love,
Excepting one, the noble earl of Kent,
Whom only calumny dare censure, we
Should yield him to thee.

Win. So? Then we did well
To wear these arms, for 'tis no less than Kent
Whom we accuse.

Hen. Kent? Ha! We'll hear your tale
That we may laugh at it.

Win. You'll sooner weep,
I fear. The princess Adelais, of France,
Is free of the infliction that impaired
Her noble mind, and through the pope makes suit
For the recovery of a son—her child
And the great Henry's. Gualo brings this letter,

Beneath the pope's own seal, to England's primate,
His grace of Canterbury. It is signed
By Geoffrey de Burgh, the father of your Kent,
And written five years back to Adelais,
In care of 's Holiness, with the request
That it be given her should she recover.
The purport is—her child has lived to be
A grace to manhood, but that he himself
Approaches death, and from his worthy son,
Hubert de Burgh, she may in proper time
Learn all a mother's heart would know.

Hen. Well plotted!

Win. And here's another paper that great Pembroke,
Dying, laid in my hands. It bears the seal
Of Henry Second, and tells how his son
And Adelais' is given to the charge
Of Geoffrey de Burgh, lord keeper of the Tower
And Dover Castle.

Hen. Keep your paper, sir!
Dost think that I'll believe these parchment tales
Of one whose stainless past the world may read?

Win. That precious past, sire, is the bed whereon
This deed's embossed. All he has done that's noble
Now serves to make this foul. Look at him now!
He has no word, but stands as one made stiff
By sin's confrontment.

Hen. Rather like the god
Was caught 'twixt the burning and the frozen worlds,
For so my too-warm love and your deep hate
Engulf him.

Win. Hear the end, my liege.

Hen. Go on,
If there's an end.

Win. This says that Henry's son,
Arrived at thirty years, shall take his place

'Mong English nobles as the Duke of Bedford,
And hold in fief five castles, herein named
Rockingham, Harle, Beham and Fotheringay,
With strongest Bedford as his ducal seat;
But if the child should die, his great estate
Shall to the church, and in the church's name
I call De Burgh to show the heir, or prove
That he is dead and by no hidden means.

Kent. The devil, sir, must pay you bounteous hire,
You sweat so in his service. Naught I know
Of ghostly Bedford, or ever heard of him,
Or that my father held a ward in charge.

Hen. We know you innocent.

Win. Then let him prove
His claim to these five castles. Two he holds,
And three were given in dowry with his sister
When she became the wife of Albemarle.
These must he yield, or show that Bedford lives,
Else will the church by force possess its own.

Alb. Mad Winchester! You plot too heavy here.
You know there are no stronger forts in England
Than these three castles that the countess brought me,
And you'd command their strength in wars against
The power of the barons! Yield these forts?
Not while I've breath to fight for what's my own!
Geoffrey de Burgh received them from great Henry
For secret, valiant service, such as knights
Have rarely given kings. Talk you of force?
My sword shall answer you. I will not yield,
And here declare a war! What say you, barons?

Pem. Your cause is ours, and here we draw our swords!

Alb. You hear, lord bishop. Moreover we must take
The person of the king, nor longer risk
His majesty with traitors. Come, my liege.

Cant. What! Take the king?

Alb. Ay, take the king!

Win. While grace

In Heaven lives, we'll keep him from your clutch!

Alb. While we are barons and can lift a sword,

We will defy you and protect the king!

Hen. I am a monarch, and will go or stay

As I do please. Lord barons, not with you.

Pem. Ah, must we force you, sir?

Win. Not from our hands!

Alb. An you do stir, my lord of Winchester,

We'll wash these floors with blood!

Cant. The king is ours!

Alb. Swords write our title! Strike, my friends!

Hen. God, no!

Win. Stay, Albemarle! We do not well to waste

The life of England. If we yield the king,

Will you give up the castles?

Pem. [To Albemarle] Say you will.

The king once ours we'll keep the castles, too.

Alb. [To Winchester] Then rest it there. Give us the
king, and take

The castles. [Aside] If you can. Ay, there 'll be wars

Will make each stone of England mine. The rocks

And cliffs I'll mark with name of Albemarle!

Win. [To Henry] Think not I risk your dear and
royal life.

I'll call out troops till trees do seem to walk

And cry for God and Henry! [To barons] To your care

We yield the king.

Pem. Then, Henry, come with us.

Hen. Plain Henry, now thy crown is gilt

Pem. We'll put

No pressure on your liberty save that

We must t' enforce our charter rights.

Win. De Burgh

Must to the Tower, there to await our judgment.
Lords Goly and De Vere, conduct him thither.

Goly. Come, sir. You will not move?

Kent.

O, Margaret,

Your love divined too well! Now for the sword
You bade me bring, and he who first should lay
A hand upon me——

De Vere. Come!

Pem. [*To the king*] And you with us.

Kent. Hark, lamb, the wolves are at thee!

Goly.

Must we move you?

Abb. [*Coming down*] Off with your hands, in warrior
Michael's name!

Touch not De Burgh! And you—lord barons—you
Who blow the gentle fires of this new peace
With wind of your hot tempers—free the king,
And wait as fathers on his tender years!

Alb. I said, my lords, we should have prating here.

Abb. The midnight vision and long hours of prayer
Give us strange powers, and we see thoughts burn
In your intent would strike their fire against
The stars of war and light disaster o'er
A shuddering world. But you——

Alb.

Back to your beads!

Abb. We'll count our beads in your fast dropping blood!
Wouldst try our swords and see if they be keen?
And if you scorn mine in a woman's hand,
Here is the hand shall bear it to your woe.

[*Takes sword from under her cloak and gives it to*
Kent. All the nuns rise, drop their cloaks and
show themselves to be armed men. The abbess
throws off her hood and stands revealed as Mar-
garet]

Hen. My guards!

Kent.

My soldiers!

Mar. Kent will not to Tower
While Margaret of Scotland is his wife.

Cant. Princess, the day is yours, and I, for one,
Thank Heaven 'tis so.

Win. And I.

Mar. Contentious lords,
Forget one hour that ye are baron-peers,
And churchmen clambering to the pinnacle
Topped with a cardinal's cap. Think ye are men
Of England, whose dear duty is to her,
And swear ye brothers as ye are her sons.
Down on your knees! Ask pardon of your king!

Win. [*Kneeling*] O, sovereign liege, in all I said and did
My conscience led me and my God did counsel.
If 'tis a sin to seek the punishment
Of one whom we believe has wronged your blood,
Then have we sinned indeed.

Hen. Wilt swear to drop
This charge 'gainst noble Kent, whose honest soul
Will cloak such guilt when north winds blow their frost
From bosom of the sun?

Win. I swear, my lord,
That your own lips shall be the first to make
Renewal of this charge.

Hen. Rise, Winchester.
You are forgiven, but not yet may take
Your old place in our heart.

[*Albemarle and Pembroke kneel*]

Alb. Were thoughts of men
Writ on the heart's red walls, this sword, my liege,
Should open mine that you might read me clear
Of all intent save truest care for thee.

Pem. And I, my king, sought but the good of England
In all too harshly crying for the rights
Of your long loyal barons.

Hen. Rise, my lords.

We hold you not attainted, but awhile
Must look with careful coldness on your love,
Till by your lives we test this swift repentance.

Alb. O sovereign merciful, we ask no more
Than thus to prove us true.

Hen. Now let this day
Be given as we intended, to His praise
Whose eye doth search the closet of the dark
As freely as the dayplains of the sun,
And reads the minds of men where kings must trust.

[*Curtain*]

LORDS AND LOVERS

PART II

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

HENRY III, *King of England*
EARL OF KENT
EARL OF ALBEMARLE
EARL OF PEMBROKE
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
BISHOP OF WINCHESTER
LORD WYNNE
COUNT DE ROUILLET, *attending Adelaïs*
STEPHEN GODFREY, *a soldier*
ORSON, *a servant to Glaia*

ADELAIS, *a princess of France*
MARGARET, *wife of Kent*
ELEANOR, *wife of Albemarle*
GLAIA, *ward of Kent*
ELDRA, *servant to Glaia*

Lords and ladies of the court, barons, prelates, guards, attendants, &c.

TIME: *13th Century*

SCENE: *England*

ACT I

SCENE 1. *Autumn in Greenot woods near Glaia's cottage.*
Table, seats, mugs and ale. Enter Eldra with a plate of cakes.

Eld. [Putting plate on table] It's the very day and hour he'll be coming, and he's not the man to count leaves by the roadside. He likes my cookin', as I've had proof, and he looks so cunnin' at me lately I could swear he was fallin' in love all over again. And I'm picking up my looks, I must say. Ay, there's nothin' like a soft tongue for keepin' a woman young. I feel 'most like a lassie, though he did say some words at first that made my heart sore, not knowing me after ten years away. And he's that handsome yet,—since he's shaved off the beard that got so between us I didn't know my own good man that married me in Dummerlie kirk on as sweet a Sunday morn as you ever see, and the priest in a new frock from Wappington, as the housekeeper told me herself— La, I forgot my lady!

[Runs out. Stephen steps from behind a shrub]

Ste. So, mistress, you've known me all the time, have you? And me playin' the fool courtin' my own wife that was ready to jump into my arms at the drop o' a hat! But I'll play you a game, my lady!

[Re-enter Eldra]

Eld. O, Mr. Stephen!

Ste. Ho, Madam Prune-face! A sweet mornin', now ain't it, but a bit briskish as suits the season.

Eld. Prune-face! By my lady's glass, I've not a wrinkle yet as big as the hair on a bat's wing! Plague take the eyes o' him that says it as shouldn't!

Ste. Well, well, I meant no harm, but mickle it takes to pinch a bruise. I brought a message to your lady from Sir Roland——

Eld. Sir Roland? He's a lord now——

Ste. Ay, 'tween the king and Hubert they've made him a lord.

Eld. Hubert! You mean his grace, the earl of Kent?

Ste. He's still my friend, Meggy. The earldom is nothing between Hubert and old friends. And I'm a-climbing too. I've had an advancement, which I don't mind telling you about, but I'll have a bit o' your brew first and a dozen or so o' them cakes, seein' you took the trouble. I could never disappoint a woman as had put herself out for me. [*Sits at table*]

Eld. [*Pouring ale*] It has been a long stretch since you were this way, sir.

Ste. Eh? Has it? Well, I don't wonder you think so in this sort o' a place. Not much goin' or comin' round here! But time don't hang wi' Stephen. There's ridin' and fightin' an' the lassies to comfort——

Eld. I thought you were honest. You've bragged enough!

Ste. As honest as a soldier, my dear,—and that ought to content any woman. [*Eldra sits at table*] Yes, sit if you like. I'm not overproud, though your place is behind a man o' my rank when he's at table. I know I've eaten wi' you and drunk wi' you, but I've had an advancement, Meggy, I've had an advancement. [*Takes sip of ale and puts it down*] Costmary! Well, let 'em as likes it drink it.

Eld. 'Tis nice and balsamy. I thought you'd like it, and saved it o' purpose.

Ste. Dose me wi' tansy and be done!

[Eldra turns her head to wipe away a tear and Stephen gulps the ale]

Ste. *[Bites a cake and puts it down]* Poh!

Eld. Don't you like it?

Ste. If I don't mind a lie for manners' sake, I do, but if I've more respect for truth than manners, I don't. Ain't your hand a little out?

Eld. I thought they were extra nice, sir. I'm sure they rose like feathers.

Ste. And may blow away for me! But come, don't hang your head, Meggy. You're too old for that.

Eld. My name is Eldra, sir.

Ste. I know, I know, but I told you that was the name o' my dear lass that's dead and gone——

Eld. Dead and gone?

Ste. That's what I said. If she ain't dead, she's where I can't get her, which is all the same to a soldier, so I've about made up my mind to give over lookin' for her. Lord, don't cry, little chicken! You are a soft one. Cryin' to think I've lost such a jewel o' a lass, but I'll tell you something to make you think better of it. There is somebody up in old Scotland that I think I'll fetch down for the comfort o' Stephen—as bonny a woman as a man need want, wi' enough siller laid up from her old daddy to make a soldier a gentleman. Lizzie o' Logan——

Eld. Oh-h!

Ste. The qualms again? Now devil take a woman as gets queasy just when a man wants to be friendly and talk things over.

Eld. *[Aside]* Liz o' Logan! My cousin as was always jealous and wanted my Stephen!

Ste. Hey, Meggy! [*She runs out, left*] Ha, ha, ha! Poor little woman! I'm a villain. I'm twenty villains. [*Eldra steals back unseen and hears him*] To treat my bonny sweet wife so! The cunningest darling that ever said yes to a soldier! I'll make it all right when she comes back, and won't there be a smackin' o' lips! [*Eldra makes signs of joy and revenge and disappears*] Where has she gone? Run off to cry her sweet eyes out, I'll warrant! I'll go find her.

[*Exit, left. Eldra and Orson come on, rear*]

Ors. O, is it true? My faithful heart is blest at last? My rival indeed vanquished? And I—I am your adored one?

Eld. Yes, but don't be a bigger fool than you can help.

Ors. Fool, ma'am?

Eld. There, there, I mean don't forget that you are a man of dignity——

Ors. Ah! Don't trouble yourself.

Eld. And cosset me before folks, like a bumpkin with his first lass.

Ors. I'll be patient—before company. Though I should just like to show that man of blood what my rights are now. But you mean it, Eldra? This is not another jade's trick?

Eld. 'Tis true—always barring that my man don't come back to claim me.

Ors. The fishes keep him!

[*Re-enter Stephen*] Ah!

Eld. [*Whispers sweetly to Orson, then discovers Stephen*] O, here he is! Now, Orson, I know you'll be friends wi' Mr. Stephen. Just to please me now. You see, sir, Orson's been courtin' me many a year, and I had just about give in like a weak woman, when you came and got me all upset somehow, lookin' so much like my man who was drowned at sea, an' his own name too. I did lose

my head so at times I could 'a' sworn you were my very man, but what you said about Liz o' Logan brought me to my right mind again, and Orson is willing to make up, and I'm sure we can all be friends, only me and Orson won't be presumin', an' shame take me to think I ever looked so high as a king's man wi' an advancement—though Orson is a man of dignity now—and—sit down, Orson! [*Sits at table and pours ale for herself and Orson*] We take a snip together about this time every mornin'. Orson's got no quarrel with the ale cost, and he does love my raisin' o' bread and cake.

Ors. And who doesn't let him starve in a ditch! We don't ask you to sit, Mister Stephen. We know our place, and hope you know yours.

Eld. Ay, a king's man must keep his head high.

Ors. High, my love?

Eld. I mean with an advancement.

Ors. 'Tis well. You know me, Eldra.

Eld. I hope I do, Orson.

Ors. And you must own, my dear, that you came to your right mind in very good time.

Eld. I'm reasonably thankful, Orson. I know what it is to be a soldier's wife.

Ors. They lie not between linen, I warrant you.

Eld. Linen? An they get muslin without begging it, they may thank fortune!

Ors. With never a silk smock for the fair.

Eld. Silk smock? An a new one comes before the old one drops off they may say their prayers for it!

Ors. But we'll be snug enough, my dear.

Eld. That we will!

Ors. And winter coming on. Ah!

Eld. True enough.

Ors. A good fire.

Eld. Yes, my love.

Ors. A little mulled sack, if the night be wet.

Eld. Indeed, my dear! And a hot posset for your cold, curdled with sweet wine.

Ors. Humph! A little tart, I beg you, to give it spice.

Eld. Well, our tastes won't quarrel. I know a wife's place.

Ors. By my life, you do! O, 'tis a merry day! Would I were not a man of dignity now! [*Pats her*]

Eld. Orson!

Ors. I mean—O, come! 'Tis a merry day! Give us a song, mister soldier!

Ste. I'll give you the devil!

Ors. How, sir? You seem disturbed. Perhaps your reflections are not so happy as mine. It may be your mistress has not such an adoring and adorable eye—can not feast you with her cheeks—[*kisses Eldra*—regale you with her lips—[*kisses her*]

Ste. Scoundrel! Kiss my wife? [*Takes him by collar and throws him aside*]

Eld. My Stephen!

Ste. My Eldra!

Eld. [*Running to his arms*] I knew it was you!

Ste. I knew it was you!

Eld. Why didn't you tell me?

Ste. Why didn't you tell me?

Ors. As a man of dignity now, I should like to ask why you didn't tell *me*!

Ste. [*Dancing up and down stage with Eldra*] Ay, Orson, 'tis a merry day! Come, come! Here's a good ale for all. To you, Orson! [*Drinks*] And let the song go 'round! [*All sing*]

Ho, Autumn time, O, Autumn time,

When every wind is jolly,

And pip and pear drop in their prime

For tooth of fun and folly!

When Hobnail's store is ripe for raids,
And grapes go to the pressing,
And apple cheeks are like a maid's
When Jack would be a-kissing!

Ho, hips and haws for vagabonds,
With russets for who'll dare,
And hazels by the meadow ponds,
Brown-sweet for barefoot's fare!

The pettychaps befit the larch,
The rocks from barn-top scold,
And summer rogues are on the march
For quarters 'gainst the cold.

Ho, Autumn time, O, Autumn time!
When every wind is jolly,
And pip and pear drop in their prime
For tooth of fun and folly!

Eld. Hist! My lady is coming with her knight.

Ste. What knight? Nobody should be coming here
but the earl of Kent and my lord of Wynne. Come, lass,
what knight?

Eld. O, now it's out, you must be as mum as a dumb
man's grave. My lady has a lover, and a sweet young
knight he is, too, who rides out every week just for a peep
at her. List! You can hear them now, just over the
hedge.

Ste. And the master doesn't know! By Heaven, the
man's a villain, and I'm a traitor to my lord of Kent if I
don't wring his neck!

Eld. Stephen! Stephen!

Ors. Hold, sir!

Ste. Off with you! I'd drag him out an 'twere the king himself! [*Leaps through the hedge and pulls the king through*] God's mercy! I am dead! It is the king!

[*All kneel to the king. Glaia comes through the hedge*]

Gla. The king?

Hen. 'Tis true. I am that wretched man,
Your sovereign. [*Kneels*]

Ste. [*Aside*] Kneel to a woman! Nay,
Not Stephen! [*Rises*]

Hen. Speak, sweet, and say that I'm forgiven!

Gla. My Henry I'll forgive, but not the king.

Hen. No pity for the king? O, take him, too,
Fair Glaia, crown and all! [*Rises*] Look not away,
Nor down, nor up, nor anywhere but here.
Say thou'lt forgive, we'll instantly to court,
For there's a spirit sits within this hour,
Like silent wisdom in a lovely face,
That gives me confidence. We'll to the court!
I know thou art a maid of noble blood,
For thou'rt indexed with rank's unerring sign,
And dearly limned by Nature for a queen.
Weep not, my sweet, thy lover is a king,
And by my soul, and these dear wildered eyes,
And by the life in these blue wandering veins,
[*kissing her hand*]

These azure rivers in a lily field—

I'll lift thee high as is the English throne!

[*Exeunt the king and Glaia*]

Ste. Now there'll be a broil at court to please all the
witches on the island.

Eld. And 'twas you dropped the devil's meat into the
pot. O, woe, woe, woe! That I should live to see my
lady wed the king!

Ste. Well, worse could 'a' happened. The king might
have had me hung, and it's bad luck to be a widow twice

to the same man. I'm for the court to keep both eyes open for what sport befalls.

Eld. Sport? O, the poor lord of Wynne! What will he do now? May be 'tis sent on him for worshippin' my lady like the Holy Virgin. Sport? O, that you should be my husband and a villain! Up with you, Orson! There's work for such poor servants as we be.

Ors. Servant, ma'am? Dost not think that this high connection of my lady's will make me lord chamberlain to——

Eld. Ay, thou'lt get thy right place, I hope, though it be lord footman to a donkey! Come along with you both!

[*Exeunt. Re-enter the king and Glaia*]

Gla. I can't believe it yet, your majesty.

Hen. Nay, Henry, love. The name you gave me first. By that alone I'll live upon your lips.

Gla. I should be gay,—alack, I am half sad.
A sort of music here is gone. Mayhap
I loved my brother better than the king.

Hen. Thy brother? Call me that no more. My bride!
The sleeping angel I would kiss awake,
For waking thou art human and can love.
Ah, Glaia, none doth know how I have dreamed,
For kings must give up all just to be kings—
How oft at night I've left the palace world
To find me lodging in the sweeter air
Where spirits hold their gentle pageantries,
And meet the winds that blow from destiny
Pregnant with fortune for my famished soul,—
While they who stood about the royal bed,
Whose stealthful eyes held me in silken jail,
Knew not my body lay untenanted
And they but guarded clay. And everywhere
'Twas thee I sought, my Glaia. When you came,
I looked, and knew that I need dream no more.

Gla. And thou art no more sad? I make thee happy?

Hen. When I am with thee 'tis continual Spring,
For in my heart is such sweet jugglery
Each winter-ragged month doth put on May.

Gla. It makes me fear to be so much to thee.
O, Henry, leave me,—leave me here a child
That never shall be woman,—ne'er shall seek
The bitter knowledge of the human world.

[*A fawn comes to her from the wood. She fondles it*]
See, brother! I would ope no book less pure
Than these large eyes. Ah, me, was ever soul
So full of earth as mine? I can love nothing
But woods and streams, and these unspeaking things
That reasonless may build no dream of God.
My Henry, why this fear that if I go
From this dear world I'll come to it no more?

Hen. Cast off the doubt—and here I trample it.
We shall come often to this home of peace.
But, Glaia, let us go. The hours run fast,
And eve must find me at the court.

Gla. The court?
There does my rival in my lover speak.
There speaks my enemy, for in the court
I shall find that will make these fears all plain.

Hen. Fear nothing now! I see thou knowest how
To please me best, making me woo thee o'er
And o'er again, for naught could be more sweet!

[*Exeunt. Curtain*]

SCENE 2. *Room in Westminster palace. The earl of Kent
and countess of Albemarle talking.*

Kent. Why do you doubt? You've ever trusted me.

La. Alb. Ay, while you were all man.

Kent.

So am I now.

La. Alb. Nay, you are one half woman, being married.
A wife's the key may ope her husband's heart
To all the world. She is the pick and pry
To every lock of trust, and weasels through
His secrets spite all seals. Swear, Hubert, swear
That Margaret shall not know!

Kent. Have I not sworn?
How many times will you demand my oath?

La. Alb. A thousand thousand will not bring me
peace!

Kent. Ah, Eleanor, why desolate your days
With this wild fear? 'Tis Heaven you've sinned against,
Not man. Look thou above for condemnation.
The world is harsh to virtue, not to sin.
See how the daughter of the earl of Valence,
John's one-time mistress, proudly holds her head,
Nor lacks for fawning followers? And mark
How Rosamond's two sons have fixed their line
Fast 'mong our English peers. If you would dare
To bring sweet Glaius forth, I do not doubt
The court would welcome her as princess born.

La. Alb. But Albemarle! He never would forgive!
Christine of Valence was not wife to him,
Else would her mimic court be dungeon close,
And racks, not lovers, kiss her dainty fingers.
You've never seen his rage! O, swear again
You'll set securest watch on act and tongue,
Nor let——

Kent. Here is your lord with Winchester.

La. Alb. O!

Kent. Come, I'll satisfy you, Eleanor.

[*Exeunt, right. Winchester and Albemarle enter rear*]

Win. The name of Kent erases church and state
And king. Fortune grows doting, and would make
A darling of this man.

Alb. She'll change her love,
Doubt not.

Win. 'Tis time. New favors upon him light
As birds on fruity branches. Castles and estates
Are but as feathers every wind brings in.
Dost not begin to fear him?

Alb. You are pleasant.
I fear? When I could lend him half my power,
And yet o'erbear him? In the north there are
One thousand leaders holding swords of me!

Win. I'm answered then?

Alb. Ay, sir. Though not from love
To Kent, nor hate to you, do I deny you.
But I'll not stand the champion of a wanton,
Though royal daughter of a royal sire.
The knightly Albemarles have never stooped
To lift adultery from its miry bed
And set its colors on their virtuous helm.

Win. Now, by your leave, the half of England comes
Into the world by left hand of the priest,
Yet fight and pray as well as you or I,
Nor bates a jot their honor in men's eyes,

Alb. You have my answer. When I'm ready for 't,
I'll tumble Kent to earth in my own fashion,
And not by means that sets French Adelaïs
On virtue's pinnacle, a star of gilt
To falsely glitter in the eye of dames
And set them wandering with their vanities
Till they forget the way to their true lords.

Win. [*Musing*] I'm writing a court history, your grace.
'Twas John, I think, who set your countess' father
On fortune's road.

Alb. Nay, 'twas the king before him,
Henry the Second.

Win. [*Going*] Well, my wary lord,

I have no bruise to nurse, and meet the blow
Befalls from any point.

Alb. What do you say?

Win. I say, my lord, I'll strike as pleases me,
And you keep cover as you will. [*Exit*]

Alb. A bruise?

Keep cover? Gods! And I stood still! The dog!
I'll after him and take him by the throat!

[*Re-enter lady Albemarle, right*]

La. Alb. What said our ancient enemy?

Alb. Enough!

He angered me!

La. Alb. But what the cause, my lord?

Alb. He'll quash the claim the church makes to my
castles

If I will aid in bringing Kent to trial
On charge of Adelaïs, who sojourns here
To push her old appeal. I will not do 't!

La. Alb. Thanks that you shield my brother, by whose
rise

You droop.

Alb. I shield your brother? When his name
Is Kent? Nay, you mistake me. I refused
Because this princess was no more nor less
Than Henry Second's mistress, and the son,
Whose death is laid to Kent, was the vile fruit
Of wantonness. A princess! I'd forgive
A milkmaid false, but error in the great
Is so bestarred by its exalted place
That those beneath mistake what is so lustered
For the true sun.

La. Alb. Hast seen the king, my lord?

Alb. I say 'tis guilt of such a heinous sort,
So foully odorous and so far bestrewn,
The sea o'errunning Britain could not wash
The island free of it!

La. Alb. 'Tis very wrong.

Alb. What! Set this princess over all your heads
As she were halo-browed, that you might pray
Her saintly patronage for your loose hopes?

La. Alb. Indeed, it is not well.

Alb. Well? By my life,
Our English dames are running mad enough,
And must be duchesses because—look ye—
They're wantons to a king! Out on your kind!
[*Aside, slowly*] "'Twas John, I think, who set your
countess' father
On fortune's road." You've been a handsome woman—
Could foot right well on Venus' heels. My soul,
There's beauty in you yet to draw an eye
O'er the picket of defence!

La. Alb. My lord, I pray you——

Alb. 'Tis well that our young Richard has my eye,
And trick of walk, and way of sudden speech,
Else I'd suspect a cuckoo in the nest,
For all your dainty strictures and high head!

La. Alb. For Christ's sake, Albemarle——

Alb. Ay, had he not
My very shoulder hitch and swelling neck
This night I'd drag him to the eastern tower
And hurl him to the Thames!

La. Alb. My God!

Alb. For you
I'd pay out my estate in hire of men
To spend their lives devising drawn-out pains
That death might feed and grow upon itself!

La. Alb. Ah, sir, no need. I'm dead now with your
words.

Alb. The king is entering. Look up, my dame.
I rage to think you could be false, and not
Because you are. Come, where's your blood, my lady?

Those frosted cheeks are not the royal color.

Smile and I'll pardon you. I know you true.

[*Aside*] But when we're home again we'll talk somewhat
Of those same favors granted to your father.

[*Enter Pembroke, Winchester, and others. Pembroke and
Winchester talk apart*]

Pem. But where is Gualo? He is friend to Kent.

Win. Shipped back to Rome.

Pem. Well done!

Win. That is made sure.

And now I'll push the claim of Adelaïs

With all the power pillared by the church.

Pem. Henry will never yield. He wraps the earl
So close in love 'twill shake the throne to part them.

There's no path to the king not barriered

By Kent's unceasing watch.

Win. I'll drop a canker

Will eat a way for us. Ah, here they come.

Pem. Arm-locked as king and king; and eye to eye,
Like lovers changing souls.

[*Enter Henry, Kent, Lord Wynne. Lords and ladies,
among whom is Margaret, enter behind them*]

Hen. [*To Kent*] I fear to tell you, Hubert, even you.

Kent. I do not fear to hear it, whate'er you do
So well becomes a throne.

Hen. You promise then

Your fullest pardon?

Kent. Your open deeds, my lord,
Bear such a noble front I should not fear
To clap a lusty "ay" to all you've done
In secret.

Hen. Thank you, Kent. And Roland, too,—
Our good lord Wynne—must echo you with pardon,
For I have touched him when he felt me not,
And shortly he must look upon his wound.

Wynne. I do not fear to see it. You've taught me, sir,
The wounds you give me carry their own heal.

Hen. But this is deep.

Wynne. The richer then the balm.

Hen. Then out, poor Henry, with thy heart's misdeed.

[*Turns to the court*]

Listen, my lords,—my gracious court,—to you
I make appeal. Is any here who holds
Me in such wintry and removed regard
He would not grant my heart its choice in love?

[*Surprise and silence*]

Win. Your wisdom, sire, that sets the cap of age
Upon the curls of youth, gives us excuse
To bid you choose at will your royal mate.
If I speak not for all, we'll hear dissent.

[*Silence*]

This silence warrants you to woo and speed.

Hen. That I have done, and now can show to you
This jewel of my choice that late I found
Deep hidden from the world. So fixed my love,
I can not wait to wander through the ways
A king comes to betrothal, and shall win
Your quick assent, even now, by bringing her
To your commending eyes.

[*Exit Henry*]

A lord.

What does he mean?

Is this some princely revel?

Another lord.

It may be,

And our part is to smile.

Win. [*To Pembroke*] Mark you earl Kent?
He changes face.

Pem.

And his pale friend, lord Wynne,
Turns corpse on 's feet.

Win.

Ha! Is it possible
They were not privy to this kingly move?

[*Re-enter Henry, leading Glaiia*]

Hen. Here, dear my lords! Look on my choice and
say

That here might come Rome's vestals to repair
Their tapers dim. Is she not royal, friends?
See how her eyes look bravely into yours,
Though on her cheek a sweet timidity
Doth couch in coral. Now commend me, all!
And Hubert, earl of Kent, say whence is she,
And what her parentage? For all I know
Is that I found her bowered in Greenot woods.

Kent. My God!

Hen. O, Hubert, muffle up the storm
Rides on your brow, and smile upon my love!

Kent. Believe me, sire, she can not be your wife.

Hen. Not be my wife? Unsay the words, dear Hubert.
You mean, perhaps, she's humbler born than I—
The daughter of a duke—an earl—a lord—
Ay, say a knight that bravely bore his shield,
And all the gap 'twixt her degree and mine
Her native graces will bridge o'er and make
Her way unto my throne.

Kent. [*Kneeling*] O, king beloved,
You must believe me! She can not be yours!

Hen. 'Then, Heaven, turn foul, thou dost not shine
for me!

Rise, Hubert, rise, for I must love you still,
Though you have robbed me of the sun and stars.

Kent. [*Rises*] My noblest sovereign!

Hen. Now let me hear
Why this ne'er mated dove can not be mine,
And I'll attend thee patient as the dead
Do list their requiem.

Kent. Sire, I am pledged.
Such sacred oaths are warders at my lips

That angels would turn pale in Heaven to hear
Their violation.

Hen. Oaths? We must not hear?

Kent. Not from my lips. It may be from another's
In better time.

Hen. In better time? By Heaven,
You shall uncover here her history,
And I myself shall say if she may be
My own or no!

Kent. Thy mercy on a man
In one hour old!

Hen. You are the torturer!
O, Hubert, Hubert, I am on my knees!

Kent. Sire, give me leave to go, and take this maid,
So long my care that I must keep her still.

Come, Glaia—child—'tis Hubert takes thy hand.
My sovereign lord, I go with sorrow hence.

I would my tongue were torn from its curst root
Than speak you woe,—but do not hope, my liege,
Your husband hand can ever touch this maid.

The thought to ague shakes my soul!

*[Exit Kent with Glaia. Margaret would follow, but is
detained by lady Albemarle, who is half swooning.
Winchester kneels and kisses the king's robe]*

Win. My king,

Thou'rt still beloved.

Hen. Ah, what canst say to one
So pinioned by distress that he must lose
His dearest friend or dearest love?

Win. My lord, if friendship may have leave to speak
As fits its holy bond and name——

Hen. O, speak!
Say anything!

Win. Too long you have been wronged.
Did not Kent win by stealth the Scottish princess,

Your promised bride? Consorting his base blood
 With royalty?—which was his secret aim,
 And all his burning love for Margaret
 But feigned and politic to gain your pity.
 Again he's at your heart! And hopes once more
 To bear himself to high success. If not,
 With face assumed and sorrowing he'll melt
 You to forgiveness.

Mar. Listen not, my liege!

Hen. [*To Winchester*] Is this your comfort?

Mar. Sire, he slanders love
 As true as God's to men, who says my lord
 Is false!

Win. Her pride would say as much, my liege.
 As for this maid,—whom majesty might choose,
 And all the kingdom feel itself adorned,—
 She's either heir to vast and rich estates,
 Or Kent dotes on her with such jealous love
 He will not yield her even to his king.
 And both these reasons, sire, I urge as one
 T' explain his stout refusal to make known
 What honesty would haste to shout aloud.

Wynne. Who says that Kent, in friendship or in love,
 E'er sought his gain, doth foully lie!

Win. This man
 Is Kent's own creature.

Hen. Ah, that's not his sin.
 He loves my Glaiia, and would make her his.

Wynne. Yes, sire, I love her,—you are right so far,—
 But, sovereign lord, I would expect as soon
 To pottle with an angel at an inn
 As make her mine. Though Hubert spurred my suit——

Hen. He favored you!

Wynne. He set no bars between us.

Hen. Ah, you could wed her—let the king go beg!

Alb. Away, you perked-up villain! Out of this!

Wynne. When you come with me, sir, that I may slit
The tongue that fouls my name!

Alb. My hot-mouthed sir,
I'll leave his majesty to teach you better manners.

Hen. And here I do, with a ne'er-ending lesson.
Roland de Born, so lately lord of Wynne,
Thou'rt banished from our realms, not to return,
Though thou shouldst live to see more years than yet
Man ever numbered his.

Wynne. Is this your will?

Hen. In truth, 'tis nothing else!

Wynne. Then, sire, farewell.

Some men are fashioned men by circumstance—
Shaped by what wind blows on them. In their veins
The heavens croak or sing. Does the sky frown,
They're muddy and befouled,—it smiles, and straight
Fair weather's in their blood, sporting its flag
In their new countenance. Not I, my lords!
Nay, on the winds my soul shall leave its shape,
And where I venture I am what I am,
A knight of England, loyal to his king. [*Exit*]

Alb. Death to his arrogance!

Pem. This judgment, sire,
Is much too modest.

Win. Hear us now, my liege,
For you have heard too little these months past.

Hen. My lords, I am too faint and troubled now
To understand if you be friends or foes,
Or if the earl of Kent be false to me;
But come, and what you choose to speak, I'll hear.
. . . Glaia, art gone from me? Ah, who would live?
The winds of doom are sold by Lapland witches,
Who mix the compass points and blow us foul
When we have paid our fortune to go fair.

[*Exeunt Henry and lords. Lady Albemarle and Margaret are left alone*]

Mar. Why do you keep me so?

La. Alb. Where would you go?

Mar. Where else but to my lord?

La. Alb. You shall not go.

O, stay with me! One moment, Margaret!

Mar. Another? Nay, you're better. I must go.

O, Eleanor, didst hear that Winchester?

Foul murderer of honor—Hubert's honor!

Can these be tongues of men? . . . And Roland banished!

La. Alb. Canst think of him?

Mar. He's Hubert's friend. Who now
Will stand by him?

La. Alb. You, Margaret, and I.

Mar. Yes—let me go!

La. Alb. What will you say to him?

Mar. Beg him not let his bitter thoughts usurp
Quite all his heart, but leave a little room
That e'er so small will make me ample heaven.

La. Alb. You will not ask of Glaius?

Mar. Ask? Dost think
That I must ask?

La. Alb. He will not tell thee!

Mar. Not?

I am his heart. His veins run not with health
Except as I know how they course, and beat
Concordantly. Doubt not he'll tell me all.

La. Alb. He shall not tell thee!

Mar. Madam, you are strange.

La. Alb. Ay, Margaret, and strangest to myself.

O, he is true! Dear God, I know he's true!

Mar. Make it no question then. For by the sun,
And heaven's starry clock that now goes by,
You shall not say he's false to Margaret!

La. Alb. To you? Ha! false to you? Dost think my thoughts

Must ever web round you?

Mar. [*Going*] You are his sister.

La. Alb. What, are you gone? Forgive me, Margaret.

Mar. Ah, you forget that I am suffering too.

La. Alb. You suffer? You?

Mar. You have a husband, madam.

La. Alb. I have. Let me remember him. Ha, ha!

You suffer, icicle? What do you know of pain

But as the lookers on about a pit

See one at bottom dying? As curious eyes

Regard the writhing heretic at stake?

Or say, as angels flying heavenward turn

To give one grudged tear unto the damned?

That is your pain, you pure, proud Margaret!

. . . O, madness, seize me!

Mar. By my fears you have

No need to pray for 't.

La. Alb. Conscience, where dost sleep?

Let me tread by nor rouse thee.

Mar. Eleanor?

La. Alb. Whence are those floods of fire? O, Hubert,
save me!

Mar. Dear Eleanor, be calm. I did not think
You loved your brother so.

La. Alb. What's that you say?

Ah, yes, 'tis Margaret. Go to him now.

Ask of this maid—then blazon all—all—all!

Mar. Come with me, Eleanor.

La. Alb. Drive home the knife

Now threatens his heart!

Mar. Come with me, come!

La. Alb. 'Tis fit

His wife should do it!

Mar. Come, dear Eleanor.

[*Exeunt, right. Henry, Winchester, Albemarle, Pembroke, enter rear*]

Win. We're glad you are convinced, my lord.

Hen. Glad, sir?

Glad that one half my heart is mottled, foul,
Diseased, and must be cut away, though I
Die with the cleaving? Ay, I am convinced.

Win. And give consent that Kent be made to answer
The charge of Adelais?

Hen. Be 't as you please.

Pem. 'Twere best to haste in this, ere all the shires
Misled in love by Kent, hear of his danger.

Win. I have the warrant here. It lacks your seal,
My liege.

Hen. [*Quickly sealing it*] Now it does not. Here splits
my heart,
And half falls with thee, Hubert.

[*Winchester comforts him. Albemarle and Pembroke talk apart*]

Pem. In fewest words,
What purpose you?

Alb. To ride at once to north,
And through my agents stir up a rebellion
Against the king, whom we must make appear
Kent's sole remover, for he now 's become
The idol of the witless multitude,
With whose hot sanction we may move 'gainst Henry
And roll his head as fast as Kent's to hell.

Pem. But you must see the trial.

Alb. So I aim.
But if I'm blocked therein, I look to you
To keep me stationed in my feudal rights,
And what you venture for me I'll make good
With forty thousand men, or horse or foot.

Hen. Where is lord Wynne? Inquire if he has gone?

Alb. He'll trouble you no more, for if my servants
Be to me loyal they've set him toward the sea.

Hen. You're pert in my own matters. I bethought me
I would recall his sentence. He is noble,
And I have done him wrong. Why press about me?
Ye are devils all! Call me the earl of Kent.

Win. He is not here, my lord.

Hen. Give me the warrant.
Quick, sir! I'll have it back! I'll take more time!

Win. 'Tis gone, my liege.

Hen. Gone? Is the devil your post?

Pem. We pray your pardon, sire.

Hen. Could you not give
One little hour to old friends taking leave,
Though one is a poor king? Away from me!

Win. Dear majesty, beloved above all kings,
Let not your frown unpay again the service
Your smile even now rewarded. 'Tis too much,
Howe'er we have endured, to ask our silence
While Kent doth rob thee of a fairer queen
Than ever made a court seem gaudy poor
By her rich self. Must we stand humbly back,
That he may please his bosom with her beauty,
And bury in his lust what forth should shine
Thine and a happy England's constant sun?

Pem. No doubt, my liege, we shall remove each bar
That shuts you from your love, and please ourselves
The most in pleasing you.

Hen. O, make her mine,
And all you wish, if kings have power o'er fate,
Will come to pass. I trust you—yet—and yet—
Who can be true when Huberts are found false?

[*Curtain*]

ACT II

SCENE 1. *A room in the earl of Kent's palace. An inner room rear, cut off by curtains. Kent alone.*

Kent. Now, Eleanor, wilt prove thee saint, or devil?
Wilt mend this breach, or must I perish in it?
Too well I know that soul's dark history
To think it may breed light. The moment globes {
The years' full character; a whole life's face
Peeps out in smallest deeds. Yet wonders are.
And Eleanor may prove false to herself
To once keep faith with Heaven.

[*Listens*] *Glaia?* Ay!

[*Goes to curtains rear, parts them softly, looks within and returns*]

She did not call. I'll watch all night. 'Twill be
No added task since there's no sleep for me.
My Margaret is safe. They dare not touch
A princess of the blood. But I am down.
'Tis said and sung there is no greater pain
Than wrenches Fortune's nurslings when she flies.
Not so. False lady of the wheel, take all!
But O, to see my king yield to the wolves
Now fang-close to his heart—there is my death!

[*Sits on a couch, his head bowed. Margaret enters, advances softly and embraces him. He looks up, returning her caress*]

Now let the world go on, I'll rest me here.
Why should I keep my hand proud on the helm,

War with the unsated surge, nor know the pause
That is the spirit's silent growing time?

Ah, Margaret, how little will content thee?

No more nor less than love and poorest me?

Mar. No more, my lord. Nor will aught less make full
My greedy cup. Thou wert the king's, but now
Thou art all mine. All mine, my love? Or is
That little "all" my greatest flatterer?

Kent. You know my heart. Where have you been so
long?

Mar. With Eleanor. I brought her home with me.

Kent. She's here?

Mar. Yes, Hubert. Ah, she loves you well.

Kent. She loves me?

Mar. Better than you thought.

Kent. [*In sudden hope*] Then . . . Speak!

What has she told you?

Mar. Nothing. What, my lord,
Should she have told me?

Kent. [*Dully*] Nothing.

Mar. I have heard
So much of this—this nothing.

Kent. Margaret,
Thou hast my soul. Wilt keep it true for me?

Mar. I keep it? No, I doubt myself.

Kent. Thyself?
Then trust my trust in thee, which meets thy love
As swallows meet the waking winds of Spring
And know where life is.

Mar. Doubt or trust, I love thee!
O Hubert, let us go this night to lands
That know how to be kind and smile on lovers.

Kent. Dost hope by flying England to fly pain,
That everywhere encircles man as fire
To shape his soul in fashion of his God?

Mar. For love and life I beg! Why do I say
For love and life, since there's no life for me
Without thy love? O, you will go with me!
Leave the ungrateful king to wed at will——

Kent. Leave Glaia to the king? The thought is flame!

Mar. [*Standing before him, suddenly tense*]
Who is this maiden that you guard as she
Were the one drop of blood that in your heart
Makes living centre? Who?

Kent. [*After a pause*] You heard my answer.

Mar. Ay, to the king, but not to me—thysself—
Nay more, for when thou takest away thysself,
Though in the smallest part, so much I die,—
And by this secret that divorces us
Am wholly slain. But tell it to me, Hubert,
And 'twill become another blessed bond,
To second union closer than the first
Re-sanctioning our souls.

[*He is silent. Her rage overcomes her*]

Unseal thy lips,
Or by the fires that flit now through my brain,
By the ancestral wrongs within my blood
That start suspicion where there is no foe, }
I shall begin to doubt thee! Who is she
To thee who art my husband?

Kent. Margaret,
Go to the maiden lying yon and look
Once more upon her vestal face, then ask
If she know aught of guilt.

[*Margaret looks silently toward the curtains*]

Mar. [*In subdued tone*] She's there?

Kent. Poor child!
I thought you'd be her gentle, elder sister,
And help me still her woeful flutterings.

[*Turns away*]

Where's now the proud, sure strength that made discount
Of Heaven's arm? O, reed-propped vanities,
Swelling usurpful till ye seem our life,
Ye must come down that we may find ourselves
And God.

Mar. O, take me back! I did not know
This spirit dwelt in me. One of my race,
A woman, long ago, stabbed through a heart
That played her false, yet she was gentle too,
And died for what her hand had done. May be
The unquiet dead come back to live in us.
O, it was she stirred this strange passion in me.
'Twas not myself. Speak to me, Hubert! Say
'Twas not myself.

Kent. [*Embracing her*] Sole angel of my love!

Mar. You'll take me back? Let Time begin his count
One minute past, and leave the last one out.
O, say a word will sponge it from the day,
Or all my future must turn back its face
And live with gazing on that minute's point.

Kent. It was not you, my heart. But say it were,
Should I pull down my heaven because a bird
Makes flying blot against it? 'Tis the doubts
That darkly flitting show love's constant sky
Forever radiant.

Mar. O me! O me!
And this is shame!

Kent. Nay, sweet! Weep, if you must,
But let thy tears be rain upon the soul
Making a fair new season.

Mar. Let me die!

Kent. So overwrought? Thou who hast been my
strength?

Mar. If I were dead then you——

Kent. Should be as thou!

'Tis not thy death but Glaia's that would be
The sad solution of these woes.

Mar. Not her,
So fair . . . and dear to us.

Kent. [*Kissing her*] My gentle love!
. . . 'Twere best she died, who now must drink the cup
That makes death sweet in coming. I myself
Almost could guide the knife unto her heart
And cut off ruder visitors.

Mar. O, veil
The thought. Its nakedness has chilled my soul.

Kent. Ay, she is God's, not mine. Leave her to him.
And now, my life, you, too, must go to rest.

Mar. You'll not to bed?

Kent. The king may send for me.
He will not sleep, for in his face was woe
Will quiet not to slumber.

Mar. O, my love,
How can I leave thee now? If thou wert held
By softest sleep on pillows of content
I could no less than weep to go from thee,
And yet these tears are all I have when thou
Art left to sad, despairing watch. I'll stay,
For I've no words to part with, none to tell
How breaks my heart in going.

Kent. Nay, I must work,
And you will call my wits to otherwheres;
Then in the morn these eyes, undewed with sleep,
Will show me not the light that must be mine.

Mar. Dost toy with words to me? Not in my eyes,
But in my heart burns thy unfailing torch,
And if you find it dim it is thy secret
Casts shade between us, not a lack in me.

Kent. If I should speak then oaths were straws in fire.

Mar. O, no, I would not have thee speak. That's past.

'Tis our misfortune that we are divided
 In this most pitchy hour that in itself
 Were nothing if our hearts could meet and melt
 In unreserved touch. In every life
 There comes a watch the soul must keep alone.
 The hour has struck for thine. And mine I feel
 Is not so far away. Now, now I go,
 My lord. Because I help you best in going.
 Our hearts would rush together, and the pain
 Grows in them baffled. Dearer than life, good night.
 I leave my prayers like candles set about you,
 And as they fail think of me on my knees
 Renewing them from Heaven. [*Exit, right*]

Kent.

Margaret!

[*Pauses, slowly takes up the light and goes off, left, leaving the room in darkness. Curtain*]

SCENE 2. *The same room in darkness. Margaret enters, right, carrying a taper.*

Mar. I'll look upon her. When sleep slips the rein
 The soul plays in the face unguarded. Then
 The conscious warder holding up the mask
 Before the secret self bares all defence
 Unheedful of approach. I'll look, and pray
 To find the lineaments so pure by day
 Still guileless fair. O, that 'twere yesterday—
 Sweet yesterday—when I knew not nor guessed
 The sad division 'tween my soul and Hubert's!
 O, knowledge, rude defiler of our dreams,
 How oft we'd give thy hard, substantial store
 To build again with bright illusion's eye
 Our happy towers on the inconstant clouds:
 [*Sees a light through curtains*]

She's up! No . . . who is there?

*[Veils her taper. Kent comes from the inner room.
He carries a candle]*

Kent.

She does not move.

O, Eleanor, how could thy heart give blood
To one so pure that he who loves her best
Would send her back to Heaven?

Mar. [Unheard by Kent]

Eleanor!

Her child! Her child!

Kent.

Fair Glaia, may'st thou rest,

Nor ever wake till angels call thee up.

[Looking back] Ay, ay, she sleeps.

[Exit, left]

Mar.

How gracious art thou, God,

To bless me so! O, wicked Eleanor!

This was the fire that maddened thee to-night.

Not fear for Hubert. How couldst make his life

The priceless cloak of thy own worthless shame?

But I can save him! I will make thee speak,

Unsistered woman!

*[Draws back the curtains, leaving them open, showing
the inner room and bed on which Glaia lies]*

Glaia, now I'll look,

Nor all thy grace shall hide the lines that mark

Thy cruel mother. Can this be the face

That breeds such misery? Fair heaven-case

Of innocence! . . . My Hubert's niece, so mine.

How lily-cold in sleep! And still . . . so still.

A kiss will not awake thee—one as light

As my own heart. So cold? O, cold as death!

[Draws back the coverlet]

Blood! Blood! A dagger here! O Heaven,

That this smooth coverlet should hide so much!

[Stands a moment in silent horror]

And Hubert thought she slept. "Rest well," he said,

"Nor ever wake till angels call thee up."

Nor wilt thou wake till then, poor Glaia. O,
How can I call him here to look on this!

[Takes up the dagger]

Strange that the slayer left his dagger here.
He in whose heart the thought of murder lives
Has more of cunning in him.

[Drops dagger suddenly]

Hubert's! O!

[Staggers away from bed and holds herself up by the curtains. Buries her face for an instant, then looks up blanched and determined]

I must act quickly. O, at once—at once!
One pause may be the grave of resolution.

[Starts toward bed, but stops]

"She does not move," he said . . . and "ay, she sleeps,"
As though she slept eternally.

[Goes to bed and takes up the dagger]

His dagger.

Oft has it pleased me to regard this hilt.
Pearls winding like a milky way about
A turquoise heaven. Even then my fate
Lurked in the blade. Why do I talk, and beg
A vile delay? Pain is sole merchant here,
And with each moment amplifies his profit.

. . . I will not pray, for prayer is softening,

And I must be too stern to pity self.

I was a princess. I'll not think of that,

For now I am a wife. And for my lord

Must die. They'll find me here, and say the deed

Was mine. My jealous hand avenged my wrong.

. . . O gentle Heaven, he is not worthy this!

Nay, nor no man, and yet for every man

There lives a woman who would die for him.

[Lifts the dagger]

I can not strike. [*Drops her arm*] I must . . . ere I
go mad

And leave the event to chance.

[*Lifts dagger, grows faint and falls with a cry to the floor.*

Kent enters, left]

Kent. 'Twas Margaret's voice. My love?

[*Advances and sees Margaret on the floor*]

O, life of mine!

[*Looks toward bed*]

Glaia! Uncovered—bleeding—dead! Put out

My eyes! Out . . . out. What cruelty yet lives

In Heaven to show me this? O, Eleanor,

Come, come and see how thy one sin has grown

To widest hell! Thy Glaia dead . . . even cold . . .

And Margaret . . . not dead . . . but would she were!

[*Bends over her*]

Yea, I could love thee then. My Margaret,

Couldst do this thing? Thy hand was ever tender,

And oft thou coveredst even guilt with mercy.

. . . She could not do it. . . . Ay, she could . . . she
could.

For her ancestral steps are marked with blood,

And but to-night her eye flashed with a look

That like an evil star did point to this.

[*Knocking without, and opening of gates*]

My summons from the king. Ho, Rufus?

[*Draws coverlet*

over Glaia's form]

Glaia,

Thou wert the bud of earth; infinity

Shall wear thy blossom and be proud.

[*Enter attendant*]

Att.

My lord?

Kent. Your mistress faints. Call up her women.

Haste!

[*Exit attendant. Kent takes Margaret in his arms and*

bears her off, right. Re-enters, goes to curtains and draws them, concealing Glaiia's bed]

O, Henry, now thy heart is struck.

[Enter an attendant]

Who comes?

Att. Your grace, I do not know. Strange men who give
No name, but say that they must see you.

Kent.

Must?

Admit them.

Att. Here, your grace?

Kent.

Ay, here.

[Exit attendant. Kent picks up dagger from the floor]

'Tis mine.

I'll wear my own. *[Hangs dagger at his belt]*

Now is the earl of Kent

A murderer. How feels it with you, sir?

[Enter officers and attendants]

Officer. My lord of Kent, you are our prisoner.

Kent. By whose command?

Off.

The king's.

Kent.

O, April heart,

Dost think 'twill ne'er be winter? What the crime?

Off. You're charged, on pain of death, to show the son
Of Adelais, of France.

Kent.

That sin is old

And faded now. I know another blots

O'er that. I'll burn your ears with 't as we go.

[Exeunt. Curtain]

ACT III

SCENE 1. *A small altar room adjoining the king's apartment. Henry bowed and kneeling. Enter Winchester and attendant.*

Att. Since morning he has knelt, and sees no one.
You are the first admitted.

Win. Dear my lord——

Hen. [*Rising and turning to Winchester*]

Will you, too, tell me she is dead?

Win. Alas——

Hen. O, not that word—the pretty mask of woe,
That never hid a tear. If she is dead,
Weep and be dumb, or find some word that rends
The heart in uttering it.

Win. My lord——

Hen. My lord!

You're too polite a mourner, by my faith!

O, Glaia, Glaia, Glaia, art thou dead?

Canst thou then sleep, O, God?

Win. That he does sleep

This deed is proof.

Hen. What deed? 'Tis false! She lives.

'Twas blessed yester morn I held her here,

And heard her laugh and say my kisses were

Like Maythorn blossoms dropping on her hair.

And can her voice be still? Nay, fiends themselves

Love music, and would spare to put so much

To silence. O, in her tongue the nightingale
Was dead, having no sweeter cause to live.
She could not die. A thousand thousand angels
Would rush to save her and with silvery wings
Beat back the assaulting devil.

Win. Would I could say
She lives! You drain my heart with every tear
You drop upon this woe. Loved majesty,
Look up and weep no more.

Hen. Stop not my tears.
They shall pour sea-like till my body lies
An isle o'erwhelmed. My eyes could lend the skies
Another flood yet lack not moisture. . . . Glaia!
It was my kiss that slew thee. But for me
Thou hadst been living still. So Winter springs
To clasp his blushing Autumn love, then spends
His weary season burying her dead leaves.

Win. Rouse you, my lord. The creature is alive
That slew her.

Hen. He is found?—and lives—and you
Stand here to tell me?

Win. Hear my story, sire.
When we arrested Kent——

Hen. Arrested Kent?
You could not wait? Well, we shall see, my lord,
My Glaia loved him and he shall not die.

Win. The moment he was taken he confessed
That he had slain the maid——

Hen. What is 't you say?
Now, by my life, I thought you said that Kent—
I'll not repeat it—'twas so strange a thing—
I'm numb since this dark news, and what I hear
By insurrection of my wits becomes
What I hear not.

Win. Recall yourself, my lord.

Your wits are loyal, and inform you rightly.
I said 'twas Kent——

Hen. Ha! Now the devil speaks
In his own person. You've thrust the cloven foot
Too far from 'neath the bishop's gown.

Win. My lord——

Hen. Now I read back and take the hellish measure
Of all your lies!

Win. Your majesty——

Hen. Sir, I have loved this man, and when I felt
Too weak for England's throne, I laid my head
Upon his breast and there grew strong as he.
And you dare say——

Win. I do not say, my liege,
The crime is his, but he confessed it so.
Here are the words in which he damns himself.

[*Gives the king a paper*]

Hen. Drop from the world, O sun! Make all the air
Dark as my heart, that from this hour shall know
No re-ascending star! Leave me, my lord.
All's as you please. Do what you will. The world
No more shall draw me forth to look upon it.
Yet I am young, and had but learned to smile.

[*Enter attendant*]

Att. The earl of Pembroke begs to see my lord
Of Winchester.

Hen. Admit him here. I'll pray.

[*Turns to altar. Enter Pembroke*]

Win. What news, your grace?

Pem. 'Tis strange enough, my lord.
Kent's wife, the princess Margaret, now swears
'Twas she who took the maiden's life, and speaks
With so much care and proof of circumstance
I scarce can doubt her.

Win. Margaret!

Pem. No other.

She says 'twas she alone, and not her husband.

Win. This fortune wears our colors. Give it welcome.
I feared she'd rouse all England,—Scotland, too,—
In Kent's defence. You know her blood of old.
But now her hands are bound.

Pem. Then you've no doubt
'Twas she?

Win. I wish to have none, that's enough
To shape my looks by.

[Henry rises and comes toward them]

Ah, my liege, we hear
That Margaret is author of the crime
We now bewail, not Kent.

Hen. That it was either
I can not whip my senses to believe.

Win. She has confessed.

Hen. Why, so did Kent. This shows
A gap in proof.

Win. Kent thought to shield his wife.

Hen. Then he must love her well, and yet your tongue
Struck hard another way. Nay, it is she
Who thinks to save her lord. Poor Margaret,
Thou hadst done better to have wed the king.

Win. My lord, we can not doubt Kent loved this maid.
'Twas as apparent as the light to eyes;
And he would pause ere put her from his arms
To bed with worms; but this same love would be
Poor Margaret's bitter cause to wish her dead;
And Jealousy, we know, is page to Murder,
Holding the candle for the hellish stroke.

Hen. But why should Kent confess?

Win. With all his sins,
He has the grace of chivalry, and thought

By his confession to save Margaret,
Not caring for his fate since he was doomed
For other crime.

Hen. I'll hear no more, my lord.

A woman . . . and that woman—Margaret.

Win. My liege——

Hen. No more. Here is my seal. 'Tis yours.
And now I beg you go. Nothing is dear
But grief, sole link 'tween me and love. Leave me,
I pray. [Turns to altar]

Win. [*Aside, gloating*] Weep, fool, my star is in my
hand!

Pem. God send you comfort, sire.

[*Exeunt Winchester and Pembroke*]

Hen. [*To attendant*] Let none approach me.

[*Exit attendant.*]

Henry sings]

I laid a rose upon my heart,

Ay me!

Soon 'gan its beauty to depart,

Ay, ay me!

I nursed it with desire,

Still did its beauty go,

For O, my heart was fire,

Cruel fire!

Ay me, I did not know,

I did not know.

[*Enter a friar through panel door behind altar*]

Art thou a shadow come to say

All men are shadows and naught living is?

Friar. I come to give God's help and ask for thine,
My son and king.

Hen. 'Tis death, sir, thus to steal
Into my presence.

Friar. So I prove my love
For thee, your highness, venturing life to reach
Thine ear's seclusion.

Hen. What wouldst tell me, father?
I've heard your voice before and found it honest.
By that, mayhap, we'll prove old friends. Come in.
[*Exeunt*]

SCENE 2. *A prison corridor. Kent alone.*

Kent. Is this the end of Kent? The block and axe
His porters to throw ope the sealed gate?
I thought a good wife's prayers had ushered me,
And weeping peers had held my garments back
Until the soul disdained to hide therein.

. . . What value's in this world that men will buy 't
With so much groaning? This strange human chaos
Where vice is often merit, merit vice,
Or if they be themselves so change deserts
That wisdom is clapped to gallows, folly to thrones,
And innocence lifts up thin, fettered hands
While guilt walks angel free. Where palsy shakes
The pen from the seer's hand, and crowing health
Bids fools to write; where Fame forgets to blush
At Flattery's board, and Honor, pendulous
'Twixt bribe and faith, dwindles inert and like
A withered finger shames the hand of state.

. . . Where Margarets can stripe their souls' pure white
With guileless blood. She, she that was a dove
To falcon turn and rend a fledgling's breast!
It casts a doubt on Heaven, makes of faith
A leper scourged from man's hale faculties,
And love a monster of diseased minds!
Come, dearest Death, and mis-shaped world away!

[*Margaret is admitted, left, by a turnkey*]

Turnkey. You're honest? All your jewels, ma'am?

Mar. Ay, all!

They have been praised, but had no worth till now

When each one buys a minute with my lord.

[*Exeunt turnkey, locking door*]

[*Margaret comes down corridor toward Kent, her hands behind her*]

Kent. [*Looking up*] What devil drove you here?

Mar. Did Hubert speak?

Kent. What do you want? Why hold away your hands?

Fear not that I'll embrace thee!

Mar. What art thou?

Kent. Nothing to thee, whatever else I am.

Away! For Death and I have just locked hands.

One moment more and I had cozened him

Of all his pain. But you, dear, damned foe,

Take up his weapons and re-gash my wounds.

Mar. Is this my lord?

Kent. Go. I command you. Go!

Eternity drops on me, and lightfoot Time

Hies like a ghost to nothing. What dost here?

Mar. I die.

Kent. You die? No fear of that. You are

Too great a lover of this life that vaunts

A bloated bubble 'twixt immortal shores.

Mar. If once 'twere true—if once I loved this world—

Thy bitter words have sucked desire to live

From all my senses. As a god I held thee,

Now mocking gods bid me look on whilst thou

Deport'st thyself 'neath mortal. Sir, what plague

Hast met? What conjuration of the skies

Disfigures thee?

Kent. The same that made thyself

A woman. Back unto your world!

Mar. O, true

I loved this life, and held a heart not dead
To music, beauty, sweet and warm delights,
An interest in the season-robing earth,
An entertained eye for fortune's chance,
And too pretentiously I sighed to leave
The unfollowed steps of fair and flying Truth,
And last, poor woman, shrank to change thine arms
For the cold circlet of Elysian clouds;
But you, pervert and monstrous, work my peace,
Unto my eyes deforming all the world
And making the unknown more dear than dream.

Kent. I monstrous? O, thou shame! To've died for
you

Were scarcely more than's done each day for love;
But I for you have heaped my name with crime,
Crime that will damn my reputation's snow
While lasts the world and men recount old tales!

Mar. 'Twas for my sake you did it! Ah, I know.
You loved me well. Would you had known me better,
Or loved me less! O, how couldst think my life
Would flower with happiness when sacrifice
Of one as dear to Heaven as myself
Lay burning at its root? Nay, I must wither
Unto this world, but as I fall thy name
Grows fairer, for I have confessed 'twas I.
For love of me you sinned. The punishment
Is mine.

Kent. Confessed? You have confessed? No, no!

Mar. I shall be soon forgot, but your great name
Will live, and since it must, or dark or bright,
I would remove as much of foulness from it
As blood of mine will cleanse.

Kent. You have confessed!

O, God of truth, let man trust to thy mercy,
Not hope to cheat thy justice! You confessed?

Already I was doomed, but you—you might
Have lived. Ay, and you shall!

[Comes near her and sees that her hands are fettered]

In fetters? You?

By holy Heaven, though giants forged these on
I'd strip them off! *[Breaks her fetters]*

Mar. O, let me wear them, sir!

My bond of blessedness—for I am blest
In dying for your sin!

Kent. That word again?

My sin?

Mar. Forgive me, Hubert. 'Twas no sin.

Indeed, 'twas none. For you were not yourself.

'Twas madness. Heaven must forgive it thee.

Kent. God help thee, Margaret! Wouldst say I did it?

Mar. Not you, but heavy, secret woe that bred

A demon in your blood to strike poor Glaia,—

And too-dear love of me which vainly hoped

To give me peace where never peace could be.

O, look not so! At God's own throne 'twill be

Forgiven thee, for surely thou wert tried

As Heaven tries its own.

Kent. Art mad at last?

Thy crime confessed to all the world, and yet

Denied to me, the only heart that knows?

[She gazes at him, bewildered]

Poor soul, her madness has been slow enough.

Come, bruised darling, with thy blood-stained hands!

Thou 'rt mine, my only love! *[Embracing her. She moves from him]*

Mar. 'Tis you that speak

Wild words. My blood-stained hands? They're free of
blood

As the pure angel's who writes golden down

The saintliest deeds of men!

Kent. Whate'er thy words,
Thine eyes are true, and there's no madness in them.
But, Margaret, I found thee by her side——

Mar. 'Twas there I swooned——

Kent. The dagger in thy hand——

Mar. Yes, in my hand, but, Hubert—hear me, Hubert!
I saw you come from Glaia's curtained bed,
Slow and despairing, murmuring "She sleeps,"
As though you said she slept to wake no more.
I entered, saw her pale, drew back the coverlet—
There ran the stream that drained her beauty's rose—
There lay your dagger—yours. And then I thought
By dying there to save your life and name,
But fainted, O, too soon——

Kent. My heart, my heart!
O, had I done such deed would I have left
My dagger to confess it? Glaia called—
Not so—I dreamed she called—and going there,
Found her in deepest sleep—or thought I found
Her so—and touched her not lest she should stir
And know her woes again.

Mar. It was not you?

Kent. That question makes your tongue a dagger's
point,

And yet my doubt of you was deeper wrong,
Measuring all the difference between
Man's grosser soul and woman's altar-lit.
O, Margaret, some serpent heart planned well
To do this deed and leave the guilt with me.

Mar. Who—who, my Hubert? Nay, it matters not,
Since 'twas not you—not you! In two small words
My heaven is built again!

Kent. We ne'er shall know.
I've foes enough, and one of them perhaps
So sought to cast me deeper by this crime,

And we shall wear his foul and scarlet mark
Even unto our graves,—for we must die.

Mar. Enough that we die sinless.

Kent. O, my love,

Who would have died for me!

Mar. And you, dear lord,

Who took such shame upon you for my sake!

Kent. Death was already on me, and 'twas naught
To make addition to my guilt. But you,
Your heart not pausing, leapt from safety's shore
Into the flood. O, might I live for thee!

A blessed bondman to thy merest wish,
From hour to hour to watch thy graces bloom
As various as Flora when she loves,
And in each furrow of thy brow that writ
Thee mortal set a new April mocking Time!
Then when no more I could dispute his doom,
Enter with thee a star-lit, sweet old age,
The fane of rest, and sanctuary where
All sorrows take their ease.

Mar. Think thou of Heaven.

Kent. But O, how dear this life! The immortal world
Is shrunk to shadow of a single thought,
And this contemned earth is sudden grown
Past circumscription of the mind's fond eye.
No—no—we must not die!

Mar. Wouldst tremble now?

When thou hast love beside thee? Nay, my lord,
Be yet the man of men, whose virtue drew
My wild resisting heart into its sun.

Kent. O, must we leave it all?—the gracious earth
Where we have loved, and heard the robins sing,
And built our nest that song might never cease?
Ah, I am weak, my sweet, and shine but in
The doting tear that dims a true wife's eye.

Mar. 'Tis not my love that paints thee radiant,
But thy own light illumines my eyes to love.
O, lord of mine, the kings of earth in vain
May hope to be thy shadowy parallel,
And where we go, in any court of air
Or cloud or heaven, still must thou be the one
Excelling star.

Kent. [*Clasping her*] Heart of the sun, beat here!
O, thy immortal fire will make Death warm
Ere he can make thee cold.

[*The turnkey opens door at end of corridor*]

Mar. My life, my soul!

Kent. O, God! Celestial marshaller of chance
To some far end of good, let me believe
Thy hand is here, and even on our heads.

[*The turnkey comes down*]

Ah, kiss me, kiss me, Heaven's Margaret.
Could I my life concentrate in one beat
I'd dwarf it so and give it in this kiss.

[*Curtain*]

SCENE 3. *A room in the earl of Albemarle's palace. A
friar, and the king in friar's dress, but uncowled, waiting.*

Hen. This is a fitting room for Death's cold jest;
So proudly hung, and filled with comfort's chattels,
As though its owner hoped long respite from
A clayey bed. Where is the tenant, father?

Friar. She'll enter presently,—ah, even now.

[*Henry puts on cowl. Enter lady Albemarle, bearing a
small box which she holds to her bosom*]

La. Alb. Father, hast brought the holy man? The saint
Whose prayer may save the soul already damned.

Fr. Good daughter——

La. Alb. Ha! Good devil! That were better!
He's here? Well, send him back. I've changed my mind.
I will not see him,—no, nor you!

Fr. Farewell.

La. Alb. Nay, do not go! Wouldst leave a soul in hell
For humor of the tongue?

[*Friar returns to her*] My soul? Pah, sir!
You think a priest can save it? I want not
Your prayers, but your good service to set right
A wrong. Don't mumble over me! I speak
Because I'm dying. Had I hope to live,
Then right might shift for itself. And you call this
Repentance! Pah! Who can keep mum when death
Turns the last screw? You know the earl of Kent?
My brother?

Fr. Yes, my daughter.

La. Alb. I know that
Will make his peace with Henry—foolish king!
I must go back to tell you—years and years.

[*Turns away as if musing*]

Fr. Speak, lady, in God's name.

La. Alb. I'll tell you all.
But I'll not kneel. I've lived too much on knees.
. . . See? Albemarle! He has as many bodies
As he has wishes to keep spy on me.
. . . He's gone, and did not speak. He never speaks,
But there's a sort of beast sits in his heart
That growls and I do hear it.

Fr. Peace, good lady.

La. Alb. Ah, good again. Foul, foul and villainous!
Come here, thou holy man. To you I'll speak.
Dost think that ever I was beautiful,
And these long locks once bound a king to me?

Hen. A king?

La. Alb. Ay, royal John. A king indeed!

Angel to me though devil to the world.
 None loved him but his Eleanor,—none, none!
 The rest were mistresses unto his throne.
 I gave my heart, he took me up to his.
 Ah, father, do you think that is my sin?
 That is my joy, my glory, my one pride.
 I'll ne'er repent it until I repent
 That e'er I smiled or felt myself alive.
 Repent? Nay, father, not till I believe
 That marble women are more dear to God
 Than we whose hearts are warm with the same love
 That beat in His when worlds leapt from His joy.
 Come back, O golden summer, when there dwelt
 Two happy beings in a magic wood,
 Treading not earth but soft enchantment's air,
 Until the beast came! There, do you not see him?
 Away, black Albemarle! O, mercy, Heaven!
 . . . Then there was Glaia, bud of our true love——

Hen. Glaia!

La. Alb. O, happy I, when he my king
 Bent over me and said, "Sweet, she is ours!"

Hen. My sister!

La. Alb. What dost say? Thy sister? Ha!
 Base monk, I tell thee that her blood was royal
 As Henry's own! Ay, nobler! Who shall say
 My spirit leapt not o'er pale Isabel's?

*[Retreats to couch by which is a small table. Puts box on
 table and lays her head upon it, weeping]*

Hen. Then Glaia was my sister. Did you hear?

Fr. I heard what I well knew before
 By my heart's guess, but had no proof of it.

La. Alb. *[Starting up]* Hear, father! You've heard
 nothing yet. Last night
 I killed her. Do you hear? I killed her.

Hen.

O!

La. Alb. You hear? Ay, for you gasp and mutter prayers.

I thought to go and watch her while she slept,
And walked a devil with me who held close
A dagger—Hubert's—that's my brother, monk.
Still, still, ye swirling fiends that in my brain
Keep your hot dance! Be still! . . . She lay asleep,
Pain in her heart and beauty on her brow;
Her curls—her father's curls—around her face.
One fell upon my wrist—and see, a burn,
As though its gold were fire. She turned to me,
And murmured as her father did in sleep;
Then in my hand the knife arose, and fell,
And as my brain rocked sick I heard him say,
My lover, bending o'er me, "She is ours."

[*Pauses*]

Hen. And then?

La. Alb. What next I know not, but I think
Some cunning led me to conceal the deed
And make escape. I left the dagger there.
'Twas Hubert's. You had best be quick, or harm
Will come to him. The world is such a fool!
But wait—O, wait till I am dead! I am
A coward born, and life has bred me such.
Hark! Albemarle is coming! Lock the door!

[*Runs to the table and takes up the box*]

Look—in this box—my lover's letters—see!
I have the key. I'll give it to the devil,
And Albemarle may look for it in hell.
O, I am dying! Hide them for me, priest.
My letters from my king. I'll burn them all.
Nay, nay, sweet, pretty words, lie down with me.
Together we'll grow cold. Ye'd fire enough,
God wot! [*Lies on couch*]

Glaia is dead. Be quiet now.

Hast heard I was her mother? There's a secret—
 No—no—I must not speak it—but 'twill out
 By doomsdate, so they say. You are a priest;
 Canst tell how far 'tis from the grave to hell?
 You think they'll let me lie a little first
 And see how 'tis to sleep? 'Tis a long walk,
 I'll lie quite still, and give no trouble—none.

[Dies]

Hen. Help! Something to revive her.

Fr.

It were vain.

Earth has not such restorative.

Hen.

Not dead?

Fr. The heavenly amaranth alone can dew
 Her brow with life.

Hen.

O, Hubert! What am I?

Let me crawl to thy feet, cast off my crown
 As I cast off this cowl, and lie in dust
 Before thee! O, too late! [*To friar*]

'Tis as you guessed.

And each confessed in sacrificial love
 Hoping to save the other. Tell me now
 Who plays the angel here?

Fr.

My liege, one who
 Would not be here but that he fears no death.

[*Removes his cowl*]

Hen. Roland!

Wynne.

My king!

Hen.

Not king, but friend,
 And equal in this woe. Rise! 'Tis no time
 To kneel. What must we do? Now Margaret
 Is safe—but Hubert? Even now they doom him.
 Barons and church are leagued to prove him guilty,
 Nor have I power against their proof to pardon
 And keep my throne.

Wynne. Take courage. Thou art king.

Hen. To th' tower then. If majesty is yet
A word of might, we'll dare them all.

Wynne. Now speaks
Yourself.

Hen. I'll be the king!

Wynne. You fill my heart
With singing prophecies.

Hen. But first we'll give
An order for the noble burial
Of this poor woman. Glaia's mother, Roland.
She called me brother, and would have it so.
Ah, little sister, did the angels tell you?
You lived so much with them. . . . 'Twas I who killed her.
My very hand, and not this poor mad woman's.
I slew them both. Oh, oh, oh!

Wynne. Dear my lord,
Leave grief unto the grave, that it best decks;
The living call us now.

Hen. You talk so, sir,
Who did not love her.

Wynne. O, my lord!

Hen. You did.
Forgive me, friend, that I forgot your heart.

Wynne. If constancy past sacrifice of hope
Is love, I loved her, sire. If to be true
To every wish that rises from her grave
Is love, I love her still. But you, my liege,
Cloud your fidelity, wasting in tears
The moments now devoted by the stars
To rescue one she loved.

Hen. Shame me no more.
We'll give an order here, then to the tower!

[*Exeunt*]

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ACT IV

SCENE 1. *The council chamber in the Tower of London.*

Barons and prelates assembled. Archbishop of Canterbury presiding. Princess Adelais present, attended by several French nobles and her women. She advances before the archbishop.

Ade. Ye peers of England, and ye men of God,
Humbly I make my suit. Not as a princess
With vassal pomp and power to awe the eye
And judgment take fore-captive, though a score
Of buried kings have dowered me with veins
Of high regality; nor sue I with
The holy potency of Heaven's pontiff,
Though his own mouth would speak if I were silent,
As speak the skies when tempests chasten earth.
But here, my lords, a lonely woman kneels;
A weary mother weeping her lost son.
You know how all my better years were spent
In that dark wild where wander minds dethroned.
When the dear world came back to me, my cry
Was for my babe—no more a babe, but up
To manhood shot as in a single hour.
And as the hunger takes some starving wretch,
Desire upon me seized to know his love,
And on his breast to die. My lords, mayhap
I am as old as is the oldest here,
But O, so poor in time. I've but that youth,

Brief youth that held its morning roses up
And fled, and this bare, aged now that drops
But aching moments till I've found my son.

Cant. Rise, royal Adelais! Believe that we
Have hearts of men, and know the love of mothers.
But to give back your son belongs to Him
Whose voice doth open graves and call the dead.

Ade. My heart cries that he lives! O, he was here
Five years ago—five little years. Why, 'twas
But yesterday! This letter tells you, sirs.
“Brave and right royal. Great Henry's worthy son.”
This letter from the man who guarded him,
Geoffrey de Burgh, an honest, good old man,
And faithful to his king. He could not have
A son so cruel as to kill my son,
Or rob the world of what did so adorn it
And yet none know.

Cant. In grief I say 'tis so;
And England lies in shame that her chief lord,
Raised to administer her vaunted justice,
Should prove so base, so foul, that——

Ade. O, my lord,
He must be nobler than you think, else would your king
Lift him so high?—make him his friend,
And with an earldom top his risen fortune?
May be he overcapped too many whom
His guilt would please more than his innocence.

Cant. We've given him fair and open trial. Urged him
In name of God and England to declare
His knowledge of the precious living charge
His father left to him. But he is brazen
In flat denial.

Ade. O, your eminence,
May I not see him? Let me plead for truth
With a poor mother's tears.

Cant. You will but hear
The unblushing lie which we have sought to spare you.

Ade. O, let me see him!

Cant. Kent, step forth and tell
This suffering princess what you will.

Kent. [*Coming out from guards*] Dear madam,
Your tears are suitors to my pity——

Ade. Henry!

Kent. Each drop a suppliant that I would ease
Were such sweet power mine. But, by my soul,
And by the mother's love I never knew
Though dreamed on, I am innocent of blood,
Nor did I ever see or know your son.

Ade. Ah, I have found him, lords! O, you old men,
If any here be old, do you not hear
The mighty Henry speak in this young voice?
My grandsire, Louis, bends that brow on me,
That eye has flashed such light from 'neath a crown.
[*To Kent*] Be not amazed; thou art my only born.
Thy mother's heart could not so falsely beat
As to deny thee! England, be glad with me!

Count de Rouillet. O, pity, Heaven! She is mad again.

Win. Take her away.

Ade. Away? When I have found him?
By those blest stars that drew my feet to his,
I'll not go hence till he may go with me!

Kent. Dear lady, go. I'll come to thee in time.

Ade. I am thy mother. Wilt not call me so?
I've cleared my vision with a sea of tears
And can not be deceived.

Cant. Wouldst call a villain son? A man condemned?
Whose headsman waits even now?

Ade. What has he done?
God does not lie, and 'twas his hand that writ
This countenance to mark a noble mind,

And not to be a villain's fair decoy.

Ah, murder him, but the same axe will strike

My life away, for never shall he go

From out my arms!

One of her women. Come, dearest lady.

Win.

Ay,

She must depart. [*To Rouillet*] Pray, lead her off, my lord.

She interrupts the court.

Ade.

You'd force me, sir?

Ah, true, I am in England. O, my lords,

I beg you let me stay! I'll not disturb you,

But sit as quiet as the stone I am.

[*Takes a seat. Her women attend her*]

You see, my lords, I'm calm. I have no son.

Win. [*To Canterbury*] ~~This time is poorly spared.~~

Pray you, proceed.

Cant. Hear then your sentence, Hubert, earl of Kent,

And Margaret, his wife, stand forth with him.

Unto the block you both shall go forthwith—

A guard at door. The king!

Win. The king? The doors are closed to all!

Hen. [*Entering*] All but the king, lord bishop. Margaret,

I bring a gift—your freedom. Ah, you sinned

When you confessed your guilt, but not before.

Our dearest Glaia died not by your hand,

Nor yet by Kent's. First, lords, know you

The maiden was the daughter of my father—

Ay, ay, there's proof. She was the child of John

And a fair lady of his court and ours,

Who, dying, made confession to her priest—

Win. A priest? We know, my lord and king, that priests

Oft sell reports unto the devil's purse.

Hen.

That from a churchman?

Win.

Would an honest priest

Betray confession?

Hen. This was given, sir,
For open use in Kent's defence. In short,
I was that priest, my lord, and played the monk
To better purpose than I've played the king.

Cant. Your majesty——

Hen. Is pleased to speak, your grace
This then, my lords, proves Kent had holy reason
For thwarting my vain love.

Alb. Could this be true
And Kent not speak when a bare word had saved him?

Hen. Have you been home to-day, my lord?

Alb. My liege,
Since morn I've ridden hard, and was much pushed
To arrive in season for the trial.

Hen. What news
From north?

Alb. 'Twas south I rode, your majesty,
About my shore estates.

Pem. Sire, I informed you——

Hen. Ay, so.

Alb. What should I do at home, my liege?

Hen. Comfort your lady, who fast droops to death.

Alb. My wife? But she was well when I set forth.

Hen. You'll find her changed! But we must speak
of Kent.

My lords, he was close pledged not to betray
The maiden's parentage for this good reason.
Her mother was his sister, living in dread
Of her harsh present lord, and she besought,
Past power to resist, his oath to die
Ere he should make it known. I know not who
Of you would prove so true to oaths if death
Lay in the keeping, or what hearts are here
Would drain themselves to guard a sister's life.

Cant. Who is this sister, sire?

Alb. This shows that kings
May even be duped like poorer men. All know
That Kent's sole sister is my countess.

Hen. Sir,
We've no mind to deny you. It is she
We mean,—the lady Albemarle.

[*Albemarle staggers*]

Pem. My lord——

Alb. Air! Stand from me! Give way! I must be gone!

Hen. We must command you stay.

Alb. This air is poison!

Hen. Stay, sir!

Alb. I say not to the king 'tis false,
But to each British lord who hears I swear
'Tis a foul lie!

Hen. My ears, sir, registered
Her last confession, that 'twas her hand struck
Her daughter's heart, her child and John's.

Alb. Let go!
It was her malady that spoke. I'll to her
And rival death in tortures! God, I will——

Hen. Death has outstripped you, sir. Her breath is
gone.

Alb. Then I'll inflict her body till her ghost
Comes back to shriek in it!

Hen. You're yet too late.
We've given orders for her due interment
As mother of our sister.

Alb. Ha! My servants!
You guard my house?

Hen. We do, my lord.

Win. [*Aside to Canterbury*] Haste, sir,
Or Kent will yet escape.

Cant. Your majesty,
The lady Margaret, thanks to Heaven and you,

12.132.

Is now at liberty, but the life of Kent
Is forfeited. He must at once to doom.

Hen. Already sentenced, sir? You're hasty reaching
Your black conclusion. Stay a little——

Cant. Sire,

We moved with deference, respecting him
Who for a time had lived within your bosom.
To longer stay his death would tempt the skies
To draw their mercy from us, seeing it were
So basely used. Guards here for Kent!

Hen. O, stay
One moment, please your eminence. My lord
Of Winchester, I'd see again the papers
First gave excuse to put this guilt on Kent.

Win. And here they are, my liege.

[*Gives him papers*]

There you will read

Of the great trust consigned by Henry Second
To Geoffrey de Burgh, and by him to his son,
As Adelais brings proof.

[*Enter Wynne, carrying a small box*]

Wynne. Your majesty——

Hen. [*Reading*] Your patience! Presently we'll hear you.

Pem. What!

The lord of Wynne returned?

Alb. Returned! I doubt

If he has seen salt water.

Pem. But I hope

He has not bent a wizard's eye upon
Our secrets.

Hen. Hear, my lords, this paper given
By dying Pembroke to our Winchester,
Signed, ay, and written, by our grandsire king.
[*Reads*] "And for we know that envious ills assail
The nobly born when not by wedlock blest——"

Win. Nay—'tis not that! My lord, I beg—it is
The other paper!

Hen. [*Reading*] "Till he be a man
And cast a weighty spear, let him be called
De Burgh, and known as Geoffrey's son——"

Win. Hear me——

Hen. Peter des Roches, here's matter for your death,
Which at your humble suit we'll moderate
To banishment.

Win. O, blasted be this hand——

Wynne. Curse not the unlucky hand that bared thy sin,
For we have other proof of Kent's high birth.
Within this box where lady Albemarle
Treasured the tokens from her kingly love,
I found a paper of another tenor,—
A letter from her father, old De Burgh,
To be delivered at his death to one
Called Hubert, his supposed son, wherein
He tells him of his birth and bids him claim
Name and estate as his great father willed.
You know the words, my fallen Winchester,—
"Rockingham, Harle, Beham and Fotheringay,
With strongest Bedford as his ducal seat."
This letter, as we know, was kept from Kent,
And where 'twas found best tells the why thereof.

Ade. [*Rising*] Who will deny me now? Must I keep still,
Ye lords of England? Have I yet your leave
T' embrace my son?

Kent. [*Crossing to her*] We'll ask no leave, my mother.
Do dreams take flesh, and prayers become alive?
For I have dreamed and prayed to see your face,
Though but in vision, thinking you in Heaven;
And all my life your voice like far off singing
Has followed me. Sometimes it seemed 'twould near
If I might wait in silence, wooing it,

But life that waits no longing pushed me on
With the old loss new in my heart.

Ade.

My son!

My only son! O, twice thou'rt born to me!

Kent. And I must double yet thy joy, for see
Thy daughter too. [*Presents Margaret*]

Mar. [*To Adelais*] If thou wilt call me so.

[*Adelais embraces Margaret*]

Hen. Those castles, Albemarle, which were your boast,
Must now revert to their right lordly owner,
The earl of Kent.

Alb.

Take them, my liege, take all,
But leave me this good sword which I would wear
As your most loyal subject.

Hen.

Nay, my lord,

Your service past but illy recommends you.

You are our prisoner. Guards for Albemarle!

Alb. What does this mean? You cast your crown by
this!

Hen. It means, proud man, you are a traitor proved.
You galloped hard last night, and 'twas to death.
Those troops you called on pretence to avenge
The death of Kent will be by Kent commanded.

Alb. [*To Wynne*] 'Tis you who've brought this hell
upon me, villain!

Hen. By your good patience, he is not a villain!
I know not all his merit, but enough
To make him my chief general; asking first
His guard against this plotting Poitevin—
This unfrocked bishop—should he e'er attempt
To make new friends and land upon our shores.

Wynne. Sire, in my arms he'll find a barrier
High as the devil scaled to enter Heaven.

Alb. [*To Pembroke*] Be lightning in my cause, if you
would save me!

Pem. I go at once to raise what power I can.

Hen. Out, guards, with Albemarle, and keep him close
Till he go forth to death.

[Exit Albemarle under guard. — Pembroke is hurrying out]

Stay, Pembroke. You
Have been too close his brother. 'Tis a pity
To sever you in death, but for the sake
Of your great father dead we're lenient
And banish you the kingdom.

Pem. Sire, I go.

[Exit]

Hen. *[To officer]* Follow him, sir, and see him straight-
way shipped.

—[Exit officer]—

Now Kent may ask and have. What gift shall speak
My great affection? What thy dearest wish?

Kent. Let him not ask for more, who has the love
Of Margaret, his mother, and his king.

[Curtain]

THE SHEPHERD

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

Read before the
Library Club -
December 2nd, 1909.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

Mr. Bradley
" Abram
Mrs. Hargrett
Mr. Little
Mrs. Allen
Mrs. Gattard
Hemai
Mr. Dykes
" Sibley
" J. J. J.
" J. J. J.
" J. J. J.

ADRIAN LAVROV, *the Shepherd of Lonz*
PETER VETROVA, *an old peasant*
CATHERINE, *Vetrova's wife*
VASIL, *grandson of Peter and Catherine*
VERA, *sister to Vasil*
KORELENKO, *betrothed to Vera*
PRINCESS SOPHIE TRAVINSKI
KALUSHKIN, SIMEON, GREGORI, UGO, *peasants of Lonz*
ANNA, ULIANA, *neighbors to the Vetrovas*
GREGORIEF, *an ex-prisoner*
GALOVKINE, *a doctor*
MANLIEF, *a student*
COLONEL ORLOFF, *of the Czar's army*
IRTENIEFF, ZARKOFF, *officers*

Soldiers, revolutionists, peasants, &c.

SCENE: *A peasant home in Russia*

TIME: *June, nineteen hundred and five*

NOTE.—The song episode in Act II is adapted from "The Green Book," by Maurus Jokai.

ACT I

SCENE 1. *A room in Peter Vetrova's cottage. Door opens centre rear into a little yard beyond which is the village street. Centre right, door into Lavrov's room. Right second entrance leads to kitchen and garden. Between the two doors right a large brick stove whitewashed and at present unused. Shelf above stove. A loom stands in right hand corner rear. A window in rear wall between loom and door. Before window a small table on which are student's books and papers. On left side of door a small, rude cabinet is built in the wall about six feet from floor. A wide bench stands under cabinet. A small high window in left wall. Near front, very high up on wall left, hangs a half length portrait of the Saviour.*

A table left of centre. Bench before loom. Two or three stools, one or two plain chairs; and a larger chair, of peasant make, near table centre.

Glimpses of grass and a fruit-tree in bloom seen through open door and window rear.

Vetrova discovered, making bark shoes. Catherine sits near him in the large chair, sewing. Vera at loom. Vasil in door rear with violin. He ceases playing as curtain rises.

Vetrova. That brings back young days, mother.

Catherine. The summer is getting into your head, Petrovich.

Vet. My heels too. If the boy plays any more I shall forget my broken bones and be off to the forest.

Vasil. I'll keep on forever if I can play your crutch away, grandfather.

Cath. [*Hastily, as Vasil raises the bow*] No! Enough for to-day.

Vera. [*To herself, as she weaves*] Rags—rags—rags! O, if I could make some of those beautiful things I saw at the bazaar! [*Softly*] Or just a sweet white coverlet for me and Sasha. [*Turns from the loom to the others*]

Vasil. [*Who has crossed to Catherine*] If I can please but one it shall be you, little grandmother.

Vera. [*Running to Vetrova, and sitting on his knee*] And if I could please but one it should be you, little grandfather!

Cath. [*Removing Vasil's arm from her shoulder*] There, go to your book, lad. The Shepherd will be coming back.

Vasil. [*Smiling*] I am ready for him. [*Crosses to small table rear, sits by it, and begins studying. Vera follows him, and they look over the book together, Vasil explaining, Vera teasing*]

Vet. [*Taking up his work*] I wish you loved the music, Catherine. It makes things different somehow . . . while it lasts.

Cath. 'Tis your spirit, Petrovich. You were never like the rest of us. The others called you queer, but I knew it was just spirit.

Vet. Eh—yes. Don't you remember the gypsy ring in the forest forty-five years—

Cath. How you talk, Petrusha! 'Tis evil times [*looks guardedly at the young people*] and we are old.

Vet. Yes . . . old. We may gather acorns in the woods, mother, but we shall never find any more flowers. Well enough. The trees would grow wrinkled with

laughter to see an old man dancing beneath them. Eh—yes, let him stoop, and pick up brush.

Cath. [*Comfortingly*] We have the children, Petrusha.

Vet. [*Sullenly*] We had their father and mother, too.

Cath. We've fared better than others. We've always had our home.

Vet. Because you served in the barin's house and the mistress liked you. Just chance! And then the barin died and Travinski got hold of everything.

Cath. But the Shepherd came.

Vet. Another chance! Life oughtn't to owe itself to that. It isn't living. Those two awful years before the Shepherd came—when Andrei died—they were real. A part of what *is*. We were like our neighbors then. Yes. [*Stops talking as Vera crosses to her grandmother*]

Vera. [*Leaning affectionately against Catherine*] How you must love Vasil, grandmamma, to make him an embroidered blouse out of a piece of your best blanket!

Cath. He is leaving us, my child.

Vera. You said I should have this if I married Alexander.

Cath. Perhaps these bad times will be over then, and we may be able to get something new.

Vera. O, these bad times! They will never be over. I've been waiting for that ever since I was born.

Cath. And we waited before you, child.

Vera. [*Repentant*] I didn't mean it, grandmamma! Can't I help you make the blouse? But it may not be the fashion in Berlin. I will ask Sasha what the students wear. [*Takes up a piece of the stuff*] And how can you sew on winter things in summer time? Winter is so far away,—a thousand years away. Vasil will never live till winter time.

Cath. [*Shocked*] Vera!

Vera. Well, you know he can't live a thousand years.

Cath. Why does winter seem so far off, dear?

Vera. O, I don't know. [*A slight pause*] Alexander says we can not be married before winter.

Cath. [*Smiling and laying down her work*] Do you love him so much? [*Vera buries her face in her grandmother's lap*] And he is right, dear. You should wait a long time. What can a young man do now? Everything is uncertain. Nothing is sure but hunger and children.

Vera. [*Looking up*] Isn't it the strangest thing in the world?

Cath. What, dear?

Vera. That he should love me.

Cath. And that you should love him?

Vera. O, no! I couldn't help loving *him*!

Cath. [*Shaking her head and taking up her work*] My thread, child. I left it in the kitchen.

[*Exit Vera, second entrance, right*]

Vet. [*Looking after her*] She is like her mother, Catherine.

Cath. Yes . . . dear Polya. I thought she was going to have a wilful heart, but she is just a woman.

Vet. [*Moodily*] I wish they were both with their parents in the only safe place in Russia, the grave.

Cath. [*Looking at Vasil*] Hush! He will be safe enough soon. The Shepherd is good to send him away, and he so poor himself. Buy him from the army, and all.

Vet. Send an innocent lad out of his own country to be safe.

Cath. He is to be a musician as well as a scholar. Berlin is the place. The Shepherd knows. He could not keep out of trouble at our universities. You know what you were in your youth, Petrovich.

Vet. I wanted to be a scholar too. But they beat me back.

Cath. You have been a good peasant. You might have

been a poor scholar. And we have had the teachers. Don't you remember the first night-class in our cottage, and the noble's daughter who wore peasant clothes and taught grown men to read? That was **thirty** years ago.

Vet. And she went to Kara for it . . . to the mines . . . for teaching men to read.

Cath. But others came.

Vet. And went . . . as she did.

Cath. God bless them! We can all read our Bibles now. And the lad is going to a university.

Vet. 'Tis far, Berlin. I am old. The Shepherd is needed everywhere. He may go any time. Vasil ought to stay with his sister.

Cath. She has Alexander.

Vet. How long will he keep out of prison with that big heart and hot head?

Cath. God will protect her.

Vet. As he did her mother! Yes.

Cath. You are hardening your heart, Petrovich. [*Turns toward icon, crossing herself*]

Vera. [*Re-entering*] Grandmamma! [*Stands in door*]

Cath. The thread, child.

Vera. O, I forgot. Uliana is in the kitchen.

Cath. [*Rising quickly*] Uliana!

Vera. It's bad news, I'm afraid. She keeps wiping her eyes pretending she isn't.

Cath. Did she tell you anything?

Vera. No, grandmamma. I couldn't make her.

[*Catherine hurries across to kitchen entrance. Vetrova takes up his crutch and hobbles after her*]

Cath. [*Sternly*] Stay with the children, Petrovich. [*Exit, closing door behind her*]

Vera. [*Opening door for Vetrova*] Go on, grandfather. [*Laughs and kisses him*] Are you afraid? I promise you Vasil and I will stay here. She wants *you*, I know.

Vet. [*Lifting her chin*] A good child, but too pretty, too pretty. [*Exit*]

Vera. [*Turns and looks at Vasil, who is absorbed in his book. Crosses to him*] Vasil?

Vasil. [*Looking up reluctantly*] Ten pages beyond Adrian's mark. He will be pleased.

Vera. Is there anything you like better than to please Adrian?

Vasil. [*Listening*] Who is in the kitchen?

Vera. Uliana.

Vasil. And you don't want to hear the gossip?

Vera. No. I want to stay with you. [*Guilefully*] You are going away, you know.

Vasil. [*Rising*] There may be news from——

Vera. Don't go! I promised.

Vasil. Then it is from Petoff.

Vera. Adrian doesn't want you to hear about such things.

Vasil. [*Sitting down*] Haven't I ears and eyes? They think I don't know . . . but see here. [*Takes up a tablet*] You may read it, Vera. [*She glances over tablet*] I wrote it this morning.

Vera. It is gay and sad too. But it is not like a June song. There are no birds and flowers in it.

Vasil. Don't you know who the "Summer Maid" is, Vera?

Vera. Summer herself, isn't she?

Vasil. No, stupid. She is Freedom—Liberty.

Vera. O, Vasil! And the old, dead Winter is——

Vasil. Yes, the Czar.

Vera. O, I'm afraid! Let me burn it, Vasil.

Vasil. [*Taking it from her*] No.

Vera. Suppose somebody should find it—a spy?

Vasil. He wouldn't understand it. You didn't yourself.

Vera. But I'm a stupid.

Vasil. [*Catching her in his arms*] Are you, little sister?

Vera. Let me have it, Vasil.

Vasil. [*Tears sheet from tablet, folds it and puts it into his pocket*] No. It's as safe as any piece of paper.

Vera. Adrian won't like it. He says your mind must be free from—all that. Free for what, Vasil? We want to be free only to do things.

Vasil. [*Laying his hand on his book*] For this,—and this [*softly touching his violin*],—and this. [*Lifting his pen*]

Vera. O, what a slave! You will have three masters. I want to be free too, but not for such things. I want to make Sasha happy.

Vasil. A woman's freedom. Free to wear fetters. Have you seen him to-day?

Vera. No, but——

Vasil. What? And the sun so high?

Vera. I am waiting for him now. I shall tease him about the great man who fell in love with me at the bazaar.

Vasil. Who was it wanted to make Sasha happy?

Vera. He ought to be glad that such a splendid officer even looked at me!

Vasil. And were you glad, Vera?

Vera. No. I ran away.

Vasil. What did Madam Korego say to that?

Vera. [*As Korelenko enters unseen by her*] She said she would never take me again, and I told her I didn't care, I was going to marry Sasha, who was finer than any officer in the world.

Vasil. Good-morning, Alexander Korelenko.

Vera. [*Whirls about and sees Alexander*] Now I can't tease him! [*Vasil returns to his book*]

Korelenko. About what, little bird?

Vera. O, I found a new lover at the bazaar!

Kore. [*Smiling*] I told Madam Korego it would never do to take you.

Vera. A fine gentleman, all covered with gold lace.

Kore. And he gave you a piece to weep over when you are only poor little madam Korelenko?

Vera. A very great man—General Petrizoff!

Kore. [*Starting furiously*] Has that—has *he* looked at you? [*Walks from her*]

Vera. [*Imploring*] Sasha!

Kore. [*Turning back to her*] My little one! I'm a jealous fool! He will not hunt out you, poor little you. [*Holds her to him, and shakes a clenched fist behind her back. Adrian enters by street door and goes up to Korelenko*]

Adrian. You would hold love in your heart and hate in your hand, Alexander?

Vera. [*Freeing herself*] O, Adrian! [*Takes his hat and stick*] You are tired. I will bring you some tea.

Adr. No, little sister. Lay the table in the garden. It makes one hungry to walk from Petoff.

Vera. So far! Sit down, you bad little brother! [*Leads him to the large chair, and goes toward kitchen*] In three minutes! [*Listens at door and says softly*] Uliana is gone. [*Exit*]

Kore. What of Petoff?

Adr. [*Looks about and sees Vasil at his book*] Vasil, lad, a cup of water from the garden well. The roads are unusually dusty for the first of June.

[*Exit Vasil, kitchen way*]

Kore. You are wrong, Adrian. It is time for him to know man's work. This is not a day for dreamers.

Adr. For dreamers, no,—but a dreamer, yes. Can we not spare *one* to step out of the days to a place in the ages? We shall die, indeed, if there is none to sing us.

Kore. He must know his theme then.

Adr. He shall know it,—when he knows art so well that

life can not tempt him to die. I will save his youth, his enthusiasm, and then . . . he may please himself.

Kore. No use. Our prisons are full of buried enthusiasms. He must take his fate with the rest of us. This is the world, not a fairy's cockle-shell. You can't save him.

Adr. I must. In him Heaven has given me back my own youth. I shall not surrender it a second time.

Kore. He belongs to himself, and he will soon find out that he is a man and a Russian. But Petoff? What did you find there?

Adr. Despair, desolation, death. That is all they have gained by revolt.

Kore. No! They have gained the name of men. To have submitted to be stripped and turned bleeding under the skies would have proved them lower than beasts.

[*Enter Vetrova, right, with cup of water*]

Vet. I begged the cup of Vasil. Let me die when I can not serve Adrian Lavrov.

Adr. [*Advancing to him and taking the cup*] Thank you, Petrovich. I would rather serve you. [*Drinks*]

Vet. Are we safe, Adrian Lavrov? Is Lonz at peace?

Adr. Yes, Petrovich. I have Prince Travinski's word that we shall not be molested so long as we are patient under the law.

Kore. The law? Under robbery and the rod! Patience under the foot of your master!

Adr. The slave can always rise above the master by forgiving him. Go among our neighbors, Petrovich, and let them know they need fear nothing while they themselves keep the peace.

Vet. Heaven, and the Shepherd of Lonz, be praised!
[*Places cup on table and goes out street door*]

Kore. You saw Travinski? How did you manage it? He has steadily refused to see any one from the people.

Adr. And he refused to see me at first, but as I was coming away I met a lady who interceded for me.

Kore. His daughter? The princess Sophie?

Adr. No. Sophie Remon. One of the Red Cross workers.

Kore. Remon? I don't know her.

Adr. Her district is farther north, but she comes here occasionally.

Kore. She must have great influence.

Adr. Yes. I was surprised to meet her in the palace.

Kore. Naturally. In the enemy's camp. A spy on one side or the other.

Adr. [*Sternly*] I, too, was in the palace, Korelenko.

Kore. [*Looking at him closely, after a surprised start*] All right. I suppose she explained her presence there.

Adr. I asked nothing. She is probably a friend of the princess.

Kore. I hope not. She can't be her friend and yours too.

Adr. Why not?

Kore. I learned to-day that the princess Sophie is one of Petrizoff's spies. She has a wager with him, a luck-piece against a tiara, that she will secure evidence to convict you.

Adr. Petrizoff need not be at so much trouble. He can imprison me without evidence when he pleases.

Kore. Not you. That may do for other poor devils, but you have friends all over Russia. It would make too much of a stir even for Petrizoff. He would have to show the papers——

[*Re-enter Vera, right*]

Vera. Have you forgotten you were hungry?

Adr. Come, Sasha.

[*They go out, right, with Vera, as Vetrova and princess Sophie Travinski appear at street door. She wears a*

long gray ulster marked with a red cross, and a plain, drooping hat with veil]

Sophie. Thank you, sir. I might have missed the house.

Vet. [*As they enter*] Bless you, no! There's not a child in the village out of its cradle that couldn't tell you where the Shepherd lives.

Soph. [*Looking about the room*] And he lives here?

Vet. As I've told you, lady,—with me, old Vetrova. Ten years since he came in at that door to be a son to me and Catherine.

Soph. He has lived here ten years?

Vet. Not all of that, for he is often called away. But he always comes back. 'Tis never too far to come back. [*Draws up the large chair*] Will you sit here, madam?

Soph. You have a granddaughter? [*Sitting*]

Vet. Little Vera,—and a grandson, too. Twins, though not a bit alike, as you may see for yourself before you go. 'Twas Vasil, my grandson, who brought the Shepherd to us. He was just seven years old then, and a fine lad. We can say that about our grandchildren, ma'am. The Shepherd loved him at first sight, and a father he's been to him ever since. His own father, my Andrei, died under the rod one bad year when taxes couldn't be paid, and his wife—the little mother—died too when they brought him in. She dropped like that. But we don't tell the children. They'll not have to dig up graves for trouble. [*Going right*] I'll let the Shepherd know you are here.

Soph. [*In sudden confusion*] Wait—I mean—yes—tell him I am here.

Vet. 'Tis luck you have found him at home, for these bitter days keep him at work. Shall I tell him your name, lady?

Soph. Sophie Remon.

[*Exit Vetrova*]

Soph. His home! What a place! But I could kneel here. [*Rises and walks nervously, but becomes suddenly composed at sound of a step. Enter Adrian, right. He stands reservedly at some distance from her*]

Adr. May I help you this time? But I hope it is not trouble of your own that brings you.

Soph. No.

Adr. Then I am glad to see you again. We had so little time this morning, and my surprise was so great when I recognized you——

Soph. You knew me?

Adr. I should know you anywhere.

Soph. But you will keep my secret? It is important. No one must suspect that I am Sophie Travinski.

Adr. [*Starts*] Ah! . . . I did not know——

Soph. You said you recognized me!

Adr. As Sophie Remon. We had not met for some time.

Soph. O——

Adr. But have no fear, your highness——

Soph. [*Approaching and offering her hand*] Not to you. To you I am still the same.

Adr. [*Not seeing her hand*] Let me thank you again for being my kind divinity this morning.

Soph. I did nothing.

Adr. Everything. The people are crazed out of their dulness. They fear new, unknown horrors. I did not know what might happen; but the assurance of Prince Travinski will renew their endurance. That was what I needed—his word.

Soph. [*Uneasily*] You can not need it. You who have such power over the people. 'Tis not because Travinski said it but because you repeat it that they believe. You are a great man, Adrian Lavrov.

Adr. [*Smiling*] Not great enough to be flattered as great.

Soph. O, I have seen—[*checks herself, changing her words*] men with men, and I know a king from a subject.

Adr. Then you are wiser than I. But what is your wish, your highness? You say you have not come for yourself.

Soph. No. For Vera Vetrova. She is in danger.

Adr. Vera? How can such a child be in danger?

Soph. You ask that in Russia?

Adr. She lives at home—she goes nowhere.

Soph. Where was she yesterday?

Adr. I was away all day.

Soph. And Vera was in Yaltowa, at the bazaar to raise funds for the wounded.

Adr. I remember now. Madam Korego asked permission to take her.

Soph. She is not a wise woman.

Adr. What has happened?

Soph. Petrizoff saw her. You know the man he is.

Adr. Yes—O——

Soph. She escaped him, but madam was pleased to give all information.

Adr. What can I do? Where will she be safe?

Soph. Not in the Czar's dominions. Petrizoff——

Adr. I know! Something must be done at once. I must think!

Soph. I have already thought. Will you trust me?

Adr. [*Gazing at her*] Absolutely.

Soph. O, thank you!

Adr. You have a plan?

Soph. A friend of mine leaves for Odessa to-morrow to embark for America. Vera can travel with her, taking her maid's passport. She will be safe until to-morrow. The officers' ball, and some other matters, will keep Pet-

rizoff occupied. I will arrange everything and send for her in the morning.

Adr. Poor little girl! It will be hard for her, and her grandparents are very feeble. Dear old Petrovich! It will kill him to lose his darling.

Soph. [*With concealed anxiety*] You—you are very fond of her?

Adr. Yes.

Soph. [*Bravely*] Perhaps you love her.

Adr. I do.

Soph. O! Then——

Adr. But it will be hardest for Korelenko. She is betrothed to him.

Soph. Betrothed! Ah, to——

Adr. Alexander Korelenko. He is headstrong, and does not always understand. I'm afraid he will want to brave things out here.

Soph. O, he can't! He must understand that he can't. That would mean the destruction of both. Could he not go with her?

Adr. Perhaps.

Soph. I can arrange that too, if he wishes. My friend was to be accompanied by a brother. He can go later. Tell Korelenko, and let me know before to-morrow.

[*Re-enter Vetrova, right*]

Vet. [*Respectfully*] Will the lady take a cup of tea in the garden with Catherine and my little granddaughter?

Soph. Gladly. [*To Adrian*] She must know me. [*Vetrova holds the door open for her*]

[*Vera's voice without*] O, you have come! This way to the garden.

[*Vetrova closes the door and crosses to Adrian, who stands motionless, apparently not seeing Vetrova*]

Vet. A sweet lady.

Adr. [*To himself*] The princess!

Vet. Eh, yes, she steps like one. But not so pretty as our Vera.

Adr. [*Catching the last word*] Vera! Ah,—Petrovich, I've been thinking that the children ought not to be parted.

Vet. You are right, Adrian Lavrov.

Adr. And you would be willing to let Vera go with Vasil to Berlin?

Vet. [*Astounded*] Go with him? My Vera? My little girl? Go away? Leave her old grandfather? I don't understand you, Adrian Lavrov. Let the boy stay with his sister.

Adr. [*Putting his hand on Vetrova's shoulder*] That must not be, Petrovich. He ought to go. He *must* go. He will be a great musician. God means it. There is no mistake about *him*. [*Leaves Vetrova and crosses to table where Vasil has been studying. Turns over the papers meditatively, forgetting Vetrova*] He will never write. He feels too much to articulate. But music—through that his divinity can flow. [*Takes up the book*] Bless the lad! He learns by leaps. [*Drops book*] And I must send him from me—my youth—my dreams.

Vet. But not Vera! Not her!

Adr. If she stays she will marry, Petrovich. And she must leave you then.

Vet. No, no! Alexander has promised me that she may live with me till I die. [*Pleadingly*] Only till I die, Adrian Lavrov.

Adr. [*Hiding his emotion*] Well, Petrovich, sufficient unto the day. Let us be happy till to-morrow.

[*Re-enter Korelenko, right*]

Kore. Vera is calling you, Petrovich. [*Vetrova hobbles off, right*] Who is this woman, Adrian?

Adr. You heard the name.

Kore. I heard what she calls herself, but who is she?

Adr. I shall not tell you.

Kore. You needn't. I know enough.

Adr. What do you know?

Kore. What my eyes tell me. She is helping Vera with the dishes—and such hands! Remember I have warned you against the princess Sophie.

Adr. Forget that slander, Korelenko.

Kore. Slander! I believe that this woman is the friend and accomplice of the princess.

Adr. [*Smiling*] You do?

Kore. [*Looking at his watch*] I must hurry to Yaltowa. Do me this favor, Adrian. Don't leave Vera alone with this—Sophie Remon. At the best she is not what she pretends to be, and for some reason she is trying to win Vera's friendship.

Adr. Alexander, I must speak to you about Vera.

Kore. [*Going*] Not a second to spare. I am already late, and Gregorief—

Adr. Gregorief! He will ruin you, Sasha. You are half a terrorist now. He will complete the work.

Kore. He is getting at the bottom of a big reactionary plot. I can't stay to explain, and we don't know enough yet—

Adr. Keep away from him!

Kore. Can't now. We must root this out. It is a terrible thing. I shall be back by midnight. [*Exit*]

Adr. And Vera must go to-morrow.

[*Re-enter Vetrova, right*]

Adr. What is wrong, Petrovich?

Vet. The lady is a good lady. Yes. But why does she want to take Vera from the old man? She has stolen the child's heart. And to-morrow she is going to send a carriage—

[*Distant cries are heard from without*]

Adr. What is that? It sounds like—Petoff yesterday. [*Uliana hurries in, street door*] What is it, Uliana?

Uliana [*Crossing herself toward icon as she enters*] O, sir, the soldiers have come!

Adr. The soldiers? Well, they are only passing through the village.

Uli. They have stopped, sir! And they are Cossacks.

Adr. Do not be alarmed. They— [*Enter two peasants*] Simeon? Gregori?

Simeon. What do they want—the soldiers?

Adr. Nothing.

Gregori. We are ordered to line up in the street. They are dragging some of the men out. Does that mean nothing, Shepherd of Lonz?

Adr. I will find out what it means. Stay here. You have done no wrong. You will not be harmed. [*Enter another peasant*] Ugo?

Ugo. Is it flogging, sir?

Adr. No! It can't be! [*Goes toward door. Cries of "The Shepherd, The Shepherd," heard without*]

Adr. [*In door*] I am here.

A voice without. We have followed your counsel, Shepherd of Lonz. We have kept the peace. We have borne the taxes. We have given our sons to the war. Why are the soldiers here?

Adr. I do not know. But I have the word of Prince Travinski, your little father, that no outrage will be committed. Come in, friends.

[*A dozen or more peasants enter. Catherine, Sophie, Vera and Vasil come on, right*]

A peasant. [*Doggedly*] I gave the Czar my two sons. He gives me the rod.

Another. My children have no bread. But the taxes are paid.

Adr. You have done your best, and I can not believe that you will be harmed.

A peasant. It makes no difference how we do. There were good men at Petoff.

[A man staggers in]

Adr. Kalushkin!

Uli. *[Rushing to him]* My Petrov! Out of your bed! Why did you come?

Kalushkin. We are to be lined up in the street and every tenth man flogged.

[Silence. Then a woman hurries in]

Adr. Anna!

Anna. *[Kneeling before Adrian]* My lad—they have taken him! His father died last night. You know how he died. He was starved. He left the bread for me and the lad. And now they have taken him—my boy—*[sobbing]*

[Adrian lifts her up in silence]

A peasant. *[Starting up from bench where he has sat as if stunned]* Flogging! *[Relapses into silence]*

Kalush. We are weak, we are starved, we can not bear the blows.

Adr. Whatever happens we will not forget that the blow we receive falls on our bodies only; the blow we give falls back upon our souls. We will be patient even unto death; we will not league with our enemy against our immortal selves.

[Groans, and mutters of remonstrance]

What have our neighbors at Petoff gained by striking back? Put out your hands and feel the ashes of their homes. And they have lost not only their homes, their children, and themselves, but an eternal triumph, a triumph for the spirit of peace in the world.

A voice at door. Here they come!

[Enter Orloff, with soldiers. Others are seen crowding into the yard]

Orloff. We want the men of this house.

Adr. I am one.

Orl. [*Looking him over*] Not you. We know you. We want the peasants. There are two here. [*Glancing at paper in his hand*] Peter Vetrova, Vasil Vetrova.

Adr. For what are they wanted? This is a peaceful village.

Orl. And we intend to see that it remains so.

Adr. I can assure you of that. My word is worth something.

Orl. Not in the army, friend.

Adr. The men of Lonz are men of peace.

Orl. A warning not to get bad habits from their neighbors won't hurt them. Revolt is catching, and Petoff has given us a deal of trouble.

Adr. Does this mean flogging?

Orl. Only every tenth man. The same as for taxes. They get off light, but we've heard no thanks yet.

Adr. Prince Travinski gave me his word this morning——

Orl. Travinski! It was this morning that he sent to Petrizoff asking him to warm up Lonz a little and be quick about it.

Adr. This morning?

Orl. You see, my friend, your word won't pass in the army. And you can't blame Travinski for wanting to take things in time here after all his bother about Petoff. [*Loudly*] Peter Vetrova!

Adr. [*Pushing Vetrova forward*] One blow would kill this old man. Have you a warrant for murder?

Orl. Let him go. Death will take care of him. [*Laughs*]

[*Adrian draws Vetrova back*]

Orl. Vasil Vetrova!

[*Vasil steps out, his face white, his eyes blazing*]

A voice. Adrian Lavrov, do you still say submit?

Adr. [*Blanching*] Submit.

Orl. [*To Vasil*] Come!

Adr. [*Stepping between them*] I will take his lot. Put me in his place.

Orl. You are not a peasant.

Adr. I live as one, work as one. We are not born to a class; we choose it. It is the lad who is no peasant.

Orl. What is he then?

Adr. A student.

Orl. Ha! In the University of Lonz! No. He must come with us.

Adr. If I can not stand for him I will stand for myself. I am one of these people.

A voice. No!

Adr. You live by my counsel. I too must live by it. If I shun the fate it brings I can not ask you to believe me again.

[*Sophie moves appealingly forward, then back unnoticed*]

Orl. I can't oblige you with a flogging,—I am sorry to say,—even to keep you in favor with your converts. Forward! To the line!

Soph. [*Stepping out*] Release the boy!

Orl. Who are you?

Soph. [*Taking off her hat*] You know, Count Orloff.

Orl. I salute your highness.

Soph. Release him.

Orl. Again I salute your highness, but my orders are from Petrizoff.

Soph. Mine also. Read this. [*Holds an open locket before him*]

Orl. [*Reads*] "The bearer is in my service. Petrizoff."
[*Softly*] Ah,—the tiara?

Adr. O God!

Orl. We release Vasil Vetrova. [*To princess, in low tone*] When may I see you?

Soph. To-night, at the ball.

Orl. [*Bending over her hand*] Till then—silence. [*To the men*] Forward!

A voice. Must we go, Shepherd of Lonz? We have hands as well as they! Must we go?

Adr. Go. The millennium is no lie, and the man who suffers wrong for the eternal right's sake is the man who brings it nearer. Go! And God give you strength to be true to yourselves—to the future—to Him!

[*Orloff, soldiers and peasants pass out. Adrian is following when Sophie comes toward him hesitatingly*]

Adr. I must go with the people.

Soph. I have not deceived you in the way you think.

Adr. [*Passing her*] I must go.

Soph. You will return here?

Adr. This is my home.

Soph. I shall wait for you.

Adr. Farewell! [*Exit*]

[*Sophie stands looking after him. Vasil approaches and kneels before her. She gives him her hand, which he kisses reverently. Curtain*]

SCENE 2. *Same room several hours later. Sophie alone, standing by the small, high window, left.*

Soph. Almost sunset. [*Turns from window*] And he knows I am waiting. [*Hears a step in the yard and turns again to window. Adrian enters, pauses in door, and sees Sophie gazing out. He advances*]

Adr. Your highness?

Soph. [*Turning her head*] You have made no haste.

Adr. I have been with the people.

Soph. [*Looking at him*] You are tired. I, too, went out, but it was so terrible. . . . You are very tired. Sit down, please. I want to stand. [*Takes a few nervous steps and goes back to window*]

Adr. [*Breaking the silence*] Is there anything to say?

Soph. [*Not turning*] The horrible thing you think of me is not true.

Adr. We will not talk about that.

Soph. [*Turns, eagerly*] You have forgiven me?

Adr. Yes.

Soph. As the saints forgive, or for love of me?

Adr. For love of God, not you!

Soph. [*Smiling*] It's the same thing, isn't it?

Adr. [*In embarrassment*] I—what did you mean?

Soph. Come, sit down. [*She takes a seat. He does not move*] Do rest. You will drop. [*He is silent*] So you do not love me?

Adr. I have not time to amuse your highness——

Soph. [*Rising*] Nor I to be amused. I know the truth. You do love me. I saw it in your face when you thought I had been false. I knew then that I was more than a mere traitor. I was beloved. And in spite of the suffering—the sadness—the shame—I was glad.

Adr. [*Trembling*] Glad?

Soph. First, let me tell you that I *am* Petrizoff's spy. [*He drops to a seat*] He wanted to convict you. You are so important, it seems, that proof from a high source was necessary. I offered to supply it. [*Smiles*] Don't you see? I was afraid some one else might be successful.

Adr. [*Rising*] I see. You are only false to Petrizoff.

Soph. [*Hotly*] I am only his good angel. I have kept him from doing terrible things by not finding the means——

Adr. Forgive me. I don't understand yet. Why did you do this—for me?

Soph. You were doing a noble work.

Adr. [*Turns away*] Yes, it was my work you wanted to save.

Soph. Adrian! [*He faces her. She stands in the light from the window*] You came to the Travinski palace two

years ago. It was June, like this—[*motioning out*—and sunset—like this. Do you remember?

Adr. I remember.

Soph. You talked to my father. I was in the room. You did not see me, a mere princess,—but I saw you—heard you. I could not leave—I could not turn away. Your words were like new dreams to me. . . . And after that Petrizoff appealed to my father to furnish evidence against you. He consented because he feared your power over the peasants. I begged him to trust the matter to me, and it was then that I made the foolish wager with Petrizoff. My light manner deceived him, but all the time my heart was dying within me for fear I should fail.

Adr. [*Falteringly*] Your highness—

Soph. O, not that! I have called you Adrian for two years. [*He is silent, and she continues*] The Red Cross work gave me opportunities to see you. At first perhaps I was only trying to save you—and win you. But now I know that I am true. I am ready to die for the things that you would die for, not for your sake but the things' sake. Though I do not love you less. My love has grown with my spirit. When we met this morning I dared to put into my eyes all that I felt. You looked as though you had suddenly met a being out of Heaven, but it was not Heaven's light upon my face; it was my love for you.

Adr. Sophie . . . let it be the light from Heaven, not poor human love.

Soph. [*Drawing back*] Have I—am I—mistaken?

Adr. No. I love you as I have prayed never to love in my life.

Soph. And I love you as I have prayed all my life I might love.

Adr. There are greater things—than this.

Soph. I know. It is because of those greater things

that I love you. [*Touching him gently*] And how can love be anything but a help—a blessing?

Adr. By taking no second place; by making itself master, as it always does; as it is doing now.

[*Moves from her in agitation, which he suppresses, and speaks steadily*] Years ago I gave myself to mankind. A poor gift, but the surrender was hard, for I loved myself and believed in giants, if not gods, who shoulder above the race. But the surrender was complete. And now shall I take another self in you? One that I could never give up?

[*She is silent. A woman approaches without, moaning. Adrian goes to the door*] Anna?

Anna. [*Appearing at door*] My lad is dead, sir. He wanted to see you again, but there was none to send. Each is busy with his own.

Adr. Dear Nikola! God's rest is his.

Anna. Yes. Heaven is a good place for our children. 'Tis better with me than Uliana. Her Petrov may live, but he will never walk. Can you come to-night and sit a bit by the lad? I'm almost thinkin' he would know it, sir.

Adr. I will come, Anna.

Anna. Just a bit. I wouldn't keep you from the living. God bless you, sir! [*Goes. Adrian remains in door until her footsteps die away, then returns to Sophie*]

Adr. You know what my work means. The daily offering up of the body to prison and death. That does not matter now, but if you were in danger, as my wife would always be, do you doubt that I would try to save you at the risk of all for which I have lived? And I have lived for it because it was the one righteous way for me.

Soph. I should never come between you and your work.

Adr. I gave up ambition—I would rather move with the multitude one step nearer the light than with my two hands catch at the sun. I gave up art—what right had I to re-

treat into the beautiful while my brothers lay blind without? Burnish my spirit to reflect gleams beyond the stars, while children were without bread? But love? O, I thought God would spare me this!

Soph. Adrian—you don't understand—I should not be in your way—your work would be mine——

Adr. O, *you* don't understand—you can't, for you are a woman, whose natural breath is the incense of sacrifice. But in me there is no angel. If you were mine, I would risk everything to hold you—one bit of rosy flesh that I might kiss!

Soph. [*Softly*] I know you better than that.

Adr. Even now I am trembling for you, thinking more of your safety than of the poor people who are waiting for me as their only hope. You must leave here at once—cease trying to protect me—what you have done for Vasil may arouse the suspicions of Petrizoff——

Soph. He will not hear of it. I spoke to Orloff. [*Answering his look*] I can take care of myself, Adrian. [*Taking his hand*] It is you who need——

Adr. [*Withdrawing his hand*] Don't! Who lets in love, lets in his master, and I must be free—free! You will despise me, but that perhaps is the better way. O, I long to deceive myself, to say that it would make no difference, that I could see the chains fastened about you, see you dragged away, and go on unfalteringly with no dimming of the vision. But it would be a lie.

Soph. The truth. You could do it.

Adr. No. And you would not want me to do it. Forgive me. You do not believe it now, but you would want me to love you first.

Soph. Yes. But I should not let you. You say yourself that sacrifice is woman's breath. I could give up even my desire to be first. But why make a question of the impossible? No woman could be first with you, Adrian.

Adr. O you don't know!

[*A man comes to door, rear, makes sign of the cross toward icon, and stands waiting*]

Adr. What now, Nico?

Nico. Petrov Kalushkin is worse, sir. Can you come before night?

Adr. In ten minutes.

Nico. The Holy Mother bless you, sir! [*Exit*]

Soph. [*As Adrian turns silently to her*] I have only this to say, Adrian. I understand, and I am ready.

Adr. And I am not. I know the man in me too well. I can not trust him. While you are safe, and I am free, go.

Soph. [*Paling and gathering up her pride*] I am sorry that I waited for the command. [*Moving to right*] I will speak to the Vetrovas, and obey you.

Adr. [*As she opens door*] Sophie!

Soph. [*Turning*] Princess Travinski! [*Exit*]

Adr. Ah, pride will not help *her*. I don't know what has happened—what I have done——

[*Enter Vasil, centre right, carrying his violin*]

Vasil. O, has she gone?

Adr. No, but she is going.

Vasil. She will come back?

Adr. Why should she? Isn't it enough that she has given herself to us for one day?

Vasil. She has given herself to me forever—by saving my life. She may forget you and the others, but she can't forget me, Adrian. O, I have been so happy to-day!

Adr. To-day?

Vasil. I have finished "The Joy of the Stars."

Adr. [*Exultantly*] Your sonata finished? To-day!

Vasil. You have been right, Adrian. This life shall not touch me. I could never understand it. When I think of it I grow blind—blind—blind! I shall sing—just sing

till my head goes off, nor ask why. The people are good, honest, work from light to dark, yet they starve, bleed, die. And I, who pray to harm nothing, I—this morning—
[*stops, shudders, crosses to table, rear, lays his violin upon it, and sits despairingly. Adrian follows and puts his arm over the boy's shoulders*]

Adr. That is over, lad. You will soon be in Berlin with your music, and you will forget. Think of it as a dream that will not come again.

Vasil. But it will be coming to others. Always somewhere there are people suffering, in prison, mad, tortured——

Adr. You can not help them now, Vasil. And to let sympathy destroy your power for work will rob them of the joy you may bring them hereafter. Forget them for awhile that you may come again with help, not tears, that ease your heart rather than theirs.

Vasil. No, I shall not forget—not for a minute—but I shall work and be blithe of soul, for what has the soul to do with the tearing of the heart, unless it be to show its free wings above it? If I were imprisoned, racked, dying, I should want the music to go on, I should try even then to help it, to turn my cries into a song. That is why I can sing while they suffer—because happiness is the right thing—because I am ready to suffer while *they* sing,—not because I forget. O, you can trust me, Adrian! And
[*with sudden appeal*] I want to be at the meeting to-night.

Adr. [*Hastily*] No.

Vasil. Yes, Adrian.

Adr. You are too young.

Vasil. As old as the morning star. Do not be afraid. Whatever touches me, nothing shall touch my song.

Adr. Your song can be saved only with your life, Vasil, and this meeting is dangerous. In a few days you are

going away. We will not uselessly waste your heart to-night.

Vasil. I do not want to go just now, Adrian. Let me stay here a little longer. There is so much you can teach me yet.

Adr. [Smiling] You make better music than I can dream. No, it is time to go.

Vasil. But I *want* to stay! .

Adr. [Quickly] You must have no wishes. [*More gently*] Aside from your art.

Vasil. Art can breathe only through life. I must live! Art is for men and women. If I do not understand them, how can they understand my music? I shall not play to sheep, nor rocks, nor stars, nor God, nor angels!

Adr. You know what I mean, Vasil. In heart the true artist is all man, all woman; but in genius, as impersonal as the universe.

Vasil. I know it! Have I not proved it to-day? Petrov Kalushkin is lying over yonder bleeding from a hundred lashes, but I—[*taking up his violin*—listen to “The Joy of the Stars!”

Adr. [Laying his hand on the bow] Stop—no—I mean—[*silence. Vasil puts down the violin and looks at Adrian*] I am not a genius, Vasil. You will be what I can not.

Vasil. And you will trust me? I may be at the meeting?

Adr. [Taking his hat] Yes. This once. And then Berlin.

Vasil. You are worn out, Adrian. Must you go again?

Adr. Again and again. You may say good-by to the princess for me.

Vasil. Wait! She is coming! [*Exit Adrian, street door, as Sophie and Vera enter left. Sophie has on hat and ulster*]

Vera. You kissed me this morning, and you were a princess.

Soph. And I will kiss you again, dear Vera. You will be ready in the morning for the visit you have promised me?

Vera. O, yes!

[*They cross toward Vasil*]

Vera. I shall love you always for saving my Vasil. It would have killed him. Adrian has guarded him always.

[*Lifting Vasil's hand*] See——

Vasil. [*Offended, drawing away his hand*] I am not a child, Vera.

Vera. [*Hurt*] O, Vasil!

Vasil. [*Embracing her*] There! The princess will think we are *two* babies.

Vera. [*With dignity*] I am betrothed.

Soph. Happy Alexander!

Vasil. [*Jealously, as she caresses Vera*] Princess, may I play to you before you go?

Soph. O, will you?

Vera. Sit here, princess.

[*Sophie takes the large chair, Vera sits on stool beside her. Vasil gets his violin from table, comes over and stands ready to play. Drops the bow in desperation*]

Soph. What is the matter?

Vasil. How can I play to that ugly coat and hat?

Soph. [*Laughing and removing hat and ulster*] Is that all?

Vasil. Now you are my princess!

Soph. Yours?

Vasil. Yes. You have sold yourself to me.

Soph. I have?

Vasil. By doing me a favor—the most binding of bargains. As long as you live your thoughts will come back to me. Could you forget me, princess?

Soph. No, Vasil. But you must not care so much.

Vasil. Don't you like me to care?

Soph. Yes, but——

Vasil. Then I will. O, it is glorious to dream and know why! To sing and know to whom the song belongs!

Soph. My boy, make your country your goddess, not a woman.

Vasil. My country! What is it? The thing that raised a knout above my shoulders?

Soph. My dear Vasil——

Vasil. Adrian is right. I must find that which is not country, nor home, nor people,—the eternal in the hour.

Soph. But Adrian cares for country, home, people.

Vasil. No. He cares only for the soul. These other things are shadow boundaries in the mind that vanish when the soul looks on them. Here, I'll show you how little he cares. [*Unfastens a chain from his neck and draws a medal from his bosom*] He gave me this, because I wanted it to play with. I was only a boy then. And he forgot all about it. Have you noticed how Adrian forgets? I would not give it back because he was going to bury it. [*Holding out medal*] See? [*Drawing it back*] You love him, don't you?

Soph. Why—yes—you strange boy.

Vasil. Then you may see it.

Soph. [*Turning away*] No.

Vasil. But I want you to look. The name is on it—his grandfather's—great-grandfather's—O, I don't know how far back. But I am sure he was a great prince.

Soph. [*Looking at medal*] Donskoi!

Vasil. Wasn't he a great prince?

Soph. Yes. But a greater man.

Vasil. And Adrian could be a prince too. [*Re-fastening chain*] But he doesn't care at all. When I asked him if this was a piece of the sun, he said "No, the last of a great shadow." I know what he meant now. Why are you sad, princess?

Soph. Because I have been unkind to Adrian.

Vasil. Don't mind. He will forgive you. He forgives everybody everything.

Soph. But it isn't pleasant to be forgiven that way, as if we were anybody else. I want to be forgiven because I am myself.

Vasil. You can't with Adrian. His star is the soul, and in its light we are all alike.

Soph. And what is your star, Vasil?

Vasil. Mine? It is the same, only I call it love instead of soul. The great love—that makes one heart beat in another's body—that makes me faint in Russia when a beggar starves in India—that fades your cheek with the girl's at an English loom—that turns the comfortable American out of doors with the driven Jew—that gives one color to every flag, and makes the might of the strongest nation the right of the Kaffir babe. This is my star, as Adrian's, only I see it warm and golden instead of cold and white.

Soph. [*Softly*] It may not be always cold and white to him.

Vasil. [*Thoughtfully*] Perhaps not, or he would not know so well——

Soph. How others see?

Vasil. [*Nods, and takes up his violin*] Shall I play now, princess?

Soph. Yes, but do not think of me,—think of——

Vasil. I know. The great love.

[*He plays, standing by window. Vera sits leaning against Sophie's lap. The princess gazes toward the door, and her look meets Adrian's as he enters. He crosses and stands by her chair. She reaches up and gives him her hand, which he clasps. Curtain*]

ACT II

SCENE 1. *Same room at night. A score or more of peasant men and women, and half as many revolutionists assembled. They are singing as the curtain rises.*

Hark, brothers, hark!

[*Knock, knock, knock!*]

What do you here,

Knocking in the cold?

Red are your hands,

Frozen are your feet,

[*Knock, knock, knock!*]

What do you here,

Knocking in the cold?

A prison we build,

[*Knock, knock, knock!*]

Here the Czar knelt,

Blessing the stones;

But when it is finished

The gates will unfold

And swallow the builders.

[*Knock, knock, knock!*]

They who labor not,

The rich and the idle,

Will imprison the workers

Who make the babe's bread.

Despair drives our hammer,

The hearts of the toilers
Lie under the blow;
We will throw down the hammer,
We will labor no more.

No, brothers, no!
Build ye the prison,
Be willing of heart;
And when it is finished,
Your heavy oppressors
Through the dark gates
In terror shall pass.
Weeping to dungeon
The rich and the idle
Then shall descend,
While above ye shall sing,
Swinging your hammers
In the broad light.
Knock, brothers, knock!
[*Knock, knock, knock!*]

[*At close of song Adrian rises. Silence*]

An old man. Speak, Adrian Lavrov.

Adr. Brothers, we have met to talk matters over.

Manlief. We have talked for seventy-five years!

A student. The lash spoke the last word to-day.

Old man. Speak, Adrian Lavrov.

Adr. Friends, the truth that was clear to you before the enemy's blow fell to-day is no less true now that the blow has fallen.

Manl. Not on your back, Lavrov.

A peasant. The lash of the Czar goes deeper than the words of the preacher.

Another. We have obeyed you until now, shepherd of Lonz.

Adr. [*Gently*] And you will obey me again.

Manl. You will obey the voice of your own manhood!

Adr. You will remember that you bear the leaven of the race, that you carry in your blood the universal peace.

Manl. Every beat of your hearts is telling you now to be men!

Adr. Submission is the only death-answer to violence. The world for very shame must cease to crucify Christ!

Gregorief. [*Leaping up*] Move your Sunday-school to the dungeons of Schlussemburg! Yes, I have been there. I was twenty years under the storm-waves of Lake Ladoga, and if your words could have reached me through the damp walls they would have received their true answer—a mad-man's answer. For torture does not give men the serenity of gods or preachers, Lavrov. Twenty years of the silence that welcomes the silence of death—twenty years of the loneliness that makes men pray for the joy of weeping together—twenty years with starving eyes on naked walls, while above me the great, wide seasons were going by—twenty years of void and gloom with the windy waters whipping my prison island, and all the more maddening because I could not hear them, because they too were a silent guard. I was like this boy [*touching Vasil, who is leaning toward him listening intently*] when they put me in, and I came out—as you see. [*Laughs ironically*] But I am fortunate. I left others behind me to whom those dark doors will never open, while I have the privilege of—*dying* above ground.

Adr. It makes no difference which side of a prison door the conquering spirit is on, Gregorief.

Greg. Ha! I wasn't a spirit then. They put me in while I was still in this life, where the flesh throbs and the blood sings. I was like this boy, I say, and I came out two months ago a broken consumptive wretch. You see

me, Lavrov. Am I fit to leaven the race? *I* am what oppression makes, not the meek angels you dream about. Into my children will go the bitterness of the wronged to come out in hate, the feebleness of the broken man to come out in cunning, the stinging for revenge to come out in murder——

Adr. But if you had triumphed—the immortal you—what a soul you could bequeath to your country! O, one such could almost save her!

Greg. One! She has them by the thousand, everywhere thwarting us—their holy tears putting out our living fire as fast as we kindle it! [*Laying his hands on Vasil*] Ah, here is a spirit worth all your saints, Lavrov. Son, take up my torch as I drop it—my torch and sword, lad——

Vasil. [*Eager and trembling*] I am a singer, not a fighter.

Greg. Songs are good weapons. Write them for us, boy. Give us one to-night before the fire dies there. [*Knocking Vasil's breast*] A war-song——

Vasil. [*Springing up*] I will! A song from Schlussemburg! [*Rushes out, street door*]

Adr. Are you the devil, Gregorief?

Greg. [*Laughing*] If I am I must have my legions. Did you intend my recruit for a saint, Lavrov? [*Fervidly*] I have sworn to level my prison before I die——

Adr. You have laid another stone upon it. There is but one power before which the prisons will forever fall—the power of the soul. Strike them down, and the blows that lay them low will raise them again for your children.

Greg. Fanaticism! You can not fit the laws of Heaven to the energies of earth, Lavrov! I tell you——

Galovkine. Leave this. We've no time. The burning of Yaltowa is fixed for to-morrow night.

Adr. [*Dazed*] The burning of Yaltowa!

Greg. Yes, Lavrov. Petrizoff intends to burn the town in our name. We are moving too fast toward the favor of the world, and must be repainted as red ogres.

Adr. Burn the town!

Manl. [*Bitterly*] That is not so bad a matter. What are a few thousand homes more or less in a country where no house is safe? The terrible part is the blow to the cause. Our great parties were never more united, never so ready for a telling stroke, and this horrible crime laid at the door of the revolutionists——

Adr. It must be prevented! We must act at once——

Manl. And get clapped into prison a little sooner. There is not time now for general action.

Adr. Burnt? The horror of it!

Greg. [*Looking at Adrian*] It *can* be prevented.

Adr. How?

Greg. Petrizoff is the whole plot, and he is not immortal.

Adr. [*After a cold silence*] You are a fool to say this to me, Gregorief.

Greg. Reserve your judgment till you know yourself better. Your heart is with us, Lavrov, in spite of your preaching.

Adr. Do you suppose I would quietly permit this murder?

Greg. Will you quietly permit Petrizoff's ten-thousand murders?

Adr. There is a difference.

Greg. Yes. We put one assassin to righteous death, he murders thousands of honest men.

Adr. [*In same tone as before*] There is a difference.

Greg. Your difference!

Adr. God's difference. The wicked may do their worst and the world still hope, but if the children of light borrow their weapons——

Greg. There is but one way to fight the devil!

Adr. If you use his own fire you must live in hell to do it.

Greg. And we don't live in hell now, I suppose!

Adr. Not an everlasting one. You have the selfishness of the living generation, Gregorief, that consumes as its candle the sun of the unborn.

Greg. Bah! Each generation must fight for its own breath.

Adr. Who conquers with a club will rule with a club. It is only through the enduring righteousness now taking deepest root in the night of oppression that true liberation will come, pushing upward to flower in the conscience of every man. When we are free from within, government will of itself fall away——

Greg. Anarchy!

Adr. Yes. Anarchy of the soul, not of the blood. The anarchy that Christ saw when he said the meek shall inherit the earth. This is the vision before me, the vision that I held before the bleeding bodies in Lonz to-day——

Greg. To the devil with your visions! Man will always be a worm while he crawls! It is those who have remembered their stature that have done most for the race. And I—from under their feet—with Death's hand upon me—I will remember mine!

[Galovkine, who is watching at the door, steps forward, lifting his hand in signal. Instantly the scene becomes one of merrymaking. A man who sits on shelf above stove begins fiddling, and a peasant dances a clog in the middle of the floor. Orloff enters, followed by two or three guards. Vetrova rises to meet them]

Vet. You are welcome.

Orl. A jolly ending to the day, good people.

Vet. We've reason to be merry, sir, as you know, who spared my lad this morning.

Cath. And you too, Petrovich.

Vet. Eh, but I don't count, mother.

Orl. 'Tis sporting time with us too. We are on our way to the officers' ball at Yaltowa. A little gayety after the hard work at Petoff. Glad to find you are not making more trouble for us.

Vet. We've had our lesson, sir.

Orl. [*Suspiciously*] And this happy meeting is to encourage yourselves in good intentions?

Vet. Sir, we are true men.

[*Vasil suddenly appears in door, rear, waving a paper*]

Vasil. I have it! The song is ready!

Adr. [*Looking meaningly at Vasil*] Don't be so sure of your first effort, my boy. Better let it get cold.

Orl. No, we'll hear it. That paper looks interesting.

Vasil. Pardon me. [*Folds paper and puts it into his pocket*]

Orl. I insist upon hearing it.

Vasil. [*Taking paper out reluctantly*] 'Tis merely a song, sir, and will hardly bear reading. I will sing it for you. [*Unfolds paper slowly*] A Welcome to Summer, friends. 'Tis an old chorus, and you can help me with it. [*Sings*]

Come out, come out with me
To meet the summer maid!
A queen, a queen is she,
Whose love is as the sea
That would all lands caress,
Whose loves are many as the sands,
And each a sovereign is,
For whom her arms enring
Is royal by her kiss,
Forevermore a king, a king, a king!

Come, dance, dance, dance, and welcome the summer maid!
Who has looked into her eyes is nevermore afraid!

We will gather our hearts together, we will mingle our
feet on the grass,
We will hold her with kisses, nor ever, nor ever let her pass!
[*The peasants join in chorus*]

Her free step is the dawn
No darkness can waylay,
Her laugh is the wild waterfall
By winter never chained,
Her hair the winds unreined,
Her eyes unbridled sun,
And all the waves are in her call
That heard is never still,
Her breath the clouds that hie
Free as they list or will,
And in her bosom find a greater sky!

Ye mothers, come, forsake
Dead fire and frozen hearth;
The bones ye call your babes, awake,
For in her lap she bears
Sweet grain and golden ears
That warming in their veins shall make
The ruddy might of men;
Your daughters that now lie
Blanched, broken, still, shall then
Lift up rose faces and forget to die.

Old Winter in his snows
Is covered, covered deep,
For all above him lie his slain,
And not until his breath
Has warmed them out of death
May he arise from his cold sleep.
Good-by, good-by, good-by,

Old Winter dead and white,
No more meet you and I,
A last and long, a long and last good-night!

[As the chorus is sung the last time, Vasil dances out among the peasants, who join hands with him and all move in a ring, singing]

Orl. I congratulate you. And now will you favor me with the copy?

Vasil. *[Seeming to hesitate]* 'Tis hardly worthy——

Orl. *[Taking it]* Leave that to me. *[Glances disappointedly at song, repeating the first line]* Humph! Yes . . . *[Puts it into his pocket]* So you are all true men enjoying yourselves? I've no objection. On the contrary. I'm in the humor to join you if my lady Bright-eyes *[looking at Vera]* will honor me.

[Vera rises, curtsies, and couples spring up, forming a dance, Orloff and Vera leading]

Orl. *[At close of the dance]* Thank you, Bright-eyes. I shall find no fairer partner at the ball, whither I must be going. And here, young man. I will leave you your song. It may be your *only* copy. *[Brings out several papers from his pocket and looks them over]* Here is the song, but . . . *[Assumes sudden sternness]* A serious matter. I have lost an important paper since I came into this room. *[Looks searchingly at their faces]* An important paper on official business. *[All are silent, betraying no emotion. He turns his gaze to Vera, who is sitting by her grandfather]* Ah, my little lady, perhaps your fingers were busy in the dance. Come forward, please.

[Vera steps out, bewildered]

Vera. I did not touch it.

Orl. Of course not. Now will you shake your scarf, please? Yes, I will do it for you. *[Shakes her scarf and a paper drops to the floor. Orloff picks it up]* Ah, found!

Good, but rather a sad affair for you, little one. Even fingers so dainty as yours must not meddle with the Czar's papers.

Vera. I did not touch them!

Orl. Of course not. But you must come with me. [*Mutterings from the men*] I hear you, friends. If any of you want to come along just make it known. Our prisons are well stuffed, but we can manage to pack away all present.

Adr. [*After a second of silence*] The child is innocent.

Orl. O, you want to go, do you? But you happen to be the one we don't want—yet. Anybody else?

Vera. [*Sobbing*] I did not touch it.

Orl. You may tell that to Petrizoff. He is always kind to beauty.

Vera. [*In terror*] Am I going to him?

Orl. He will not be far away, I imagine.

Adr. You can not take this child. The paper was not stolen.

Orl. You saw it drop from her scarf.

Adr. Where you put it.

Orl. [*In a rage*] Your mouth will soon be shut! If I could have had my way this morning your hide wouldn't hold shucks to-night!

[*Noise of a carriage at door. Sophie enters in ball dress. She draws back in astonishment at sight of Orloff*]

Soph. [*Faintly*] You here?

Orl. And you?

Soph. [*Composed*] May I speak to you, Count Orloff?

Orl. At your service, your highness.

[*They draw aside, left, front. The peasants talk in low tones. Guards stand by Vera*]

Soph. Of course I know why you are here, but I had to simulate surprise.

Orl. You were very successful.

Soph. Since the exposure of this morning the people are ready to suspect me, and I must retain their confidence or my usefulness is at an end.

Orl. Quite.

Soph. They heard to-day of the girl's danger, and were planning her escape, so I, not knowing whether you would arrive in time, stopped—to——

Orl. Yes?

Soph. Quiet their fears and assure them of her safety. Are there any prisoners besides the girl?

Orl. No, but I would give something to take this insolent Shepherd. I've only a few hours to wait though.

Soph. A few hours?

Orl. Yes—ah, you *don't* know everything then!

Soph. Dear man, I know everything but one,—that is, how much *you* know. If you will go to the ball in my carriage we may find out how far we can trust each other.

Orl. Angel!

Soph. Don't! The people—you must pretend to oppose me. They think I am interceding for the girl.

Orl. [*As if suddenly recalling something*] Why did you save the boy this morning?

Soph. I will explain that too—in the carriage. We must go now. I first, so they will not know we leave together.

Orl. [*Crestfallen*] I promised Petrizoff not to leave the girl till I had her safe in prison. There have been so many escapes——

Soph. [*With a glance at Vera*] She *is* pretty. Good-evening then.

Orl. Wait—I will go with you!

Soph. [*Melting*] Will you? Then you sha'n't. You shall take no risks for me.

Orl. Risk! I would risk anything. Ah, you can't deprive me now.

Soph. Can you trust the guards?

Orl. I *will* trust them!

Soph. Very well. I will wait for you. [*Going, stops before Adrian*] I have not been able to obtain her release, but I am sure there is hope. At least I have touched Colonel Orloff's heart. Have I not, Count?

Orl. You have indeed!

Soph. [*Looking steadily at Adrian*] And you will hear news of great importance before morning. [*To Orloff*] Will he not?

Orl. Without doubt, your highness.

Soph. [*Going, again turns to Adrian*] The Count will give you his word that *I am to be trusted*.

Orl. To be sure, your highness.

Soph. Good-night. [*Exit*]

Orl. [*After following Sophie's departure with a fatuous look*] Come, lady-bird, we must be moving. [*Starts out, the guards following with Vera. Vetrova, who has seemed quite stunned, suddenly rushes after them and beats guards with his crutch*]

Orl. [*Seizing him by the collar and throwing him to the floor*] You old fool! We don't want to bother with you!

[*Exeunt Orloff, guards and Vera. Vetrova, lying on floor, lifts his fist and curses*]

Adr. [*Bending over him*] Petrusha!

Vet. Let me be, Adrian Lavrov! I have held my peace all my life to die cursing at last! I was dumb when they broke my bones under the rod. I was dumb when my son died under the lash. But Vera, my little girl—dragged to that—O God, send thy fires upon him! Curse him—curse him—curse—— [*Dies. The peasants cross themselves. Some kneel before the icon, praying. Catherine gazes at Vetrova in hopeless terror. Galovkine kneels and examines the body*]

Galovkine. Dead.

Cath. Dead—and a curse on his lips. My Petrusha—dead—and a curse on his lips.

[Two men pick up the body and bear it off right centre, Adrian opening the door. Catherine follows with several women. The other peasants go off silently, street door, leaving only Adrian, Vasil and the revolutionists]

Greg. As I was saying when—the Czar interrupted us—Petrizoff must die. And you will help us, Lavrov. Yes—you must! You say yourself that our best hope lies in sympathy and sentiment——

Adr. Which the bomb utterly destroys.

Greg. Not when the Shepherd throws it. Wait! I do not mean that literally, for this *[raising his hand]* is the consecrated hand. But your name as our leader would sanctify the deed.

Adr. Your leader?

Greg. Yes. Not only for this, but for our army. Your name is a divine word in every peasant home in Russia. It is cheered by every body of workmen gathered together to-night, and in the army who would not surrender the colors of Romanov to the hero line of Donskoi?

Adr. *[Starting]* Gregorief——

Greg. Wait! They are all ready now. The peasantry, inspired by the teaching of our martyrs for the last thirty years,—the nobility with awakened conscience,—the workmen, one great body with suspended arms,—the army of the Czar ready to become the army of the people,—all await their leader—you! *[A pause]* Russia is looking but one way—to freedom. To-day you may lead us to victory almost without blood. Let Petrizoff commit this crime in the name of liberty, and to-morrow we shall be like the scattered limbs of a dissevered body. You will not let this be, Lavrov. You will——

Adr. No! Let civilization wait another century rather than deliver her flag to the hands of murderers!

Greg. And where is it now if not in the hands of murderers?

Adr. It is not in *their* hands, Gregorief, but in ours, that are yet clean. Do this thing, and it is you, not Petrizoff, who give the greatest blow to freedom. The world is just beginning to understand us——

Greg. Yes! Where is that understanding growing strongest? In America. And how does the autocracy propose to meet this new influence? By a secret commercial treaty with the United States. Give any government a pocket interest in the security of another and to the winds with sympathy! Petrizoff has his agents there now, and the burning of Yaltowa is only a part of his scheme to chill the hearts that are warming to us. But he shall not live to do it. You will not let him live, Lavrov. My God, don't you see that your opportunity has come?

Adr. Yes. My opportunity to point once more to where the sun shall rise.

Greg. The sun never rises on the blind. You would throw us back into night for another thousand years!

Adr. What are a thousand years to the soul of man on the right path to the right thing?

Galovkine. [*Plucking at Gregorief*] Come away. We lose time here.

Greg. Not until I tell this fool where he stands! You imagine, Lavrov, that you are a friend to freedom, but a greater enemy does not tread Russian soil. Why does the government leave you at work? Because of your power to subdue the spirit in men. It is you—such as you—who forget our shackles and fill the prisons. But thank the Powers that keep the race alive, there are still some of us who believe in manhood—in the virtues of the heart as well as the soul—in courage, honor, justice! [*To the others*] Come up to Breshloff's. We will finish there.

[*Enter Korelenko hurriedly*]

Greg. [*Grasping his hand*] Korelenko! The word? What is it?

Kore. What you wished. We needed only the consent of the Social Democrats to Petrizoff's death——

Greg. Yes, yes!

Kore. And I have brought their sanction——

Greg. [*Almost sobbing*] Thank God!

Kore. If it is done under the leadership of the Shepherd of Lonz.

[*Adrian staggers back against loom*]

Greg. [*Clutching Korelenko*] Take back that infernal proviso!

Kore. I thought you wished it.

Greg. I did, when I believed the man there was human.

Kore. He is. The most human of us all. You don't know him. Adrian, you see that all depends upon you——

Adr. [*Waving him away*] Begone—all of you!

Manl. Come! God gave us good right arms. We need not wait for Lavrov's.

Kore. But can we do without the Social Democrats?

Greg. Yes! We have the others. Come to Breshloff's!

[*All go except Korelenko, who lingers in the door. Adrian sits exhausted on bench before loom*]

Adr. Sasha?

Kore. [*Turning back quickly*] Well?

Adr. You have chosen?

Kore. Between my friends and my enemies? Yes.

Adr. Between the body and the soul.

Kore. Soul! There is none in Russia. When we get possession of our bodies we may be permitted to cultivate souls!

Adr. If you would wait a little, Sasha. Reforms are coming. The Czar will grant a constitution——

Kore. He will grant what we take, no more. And what do we gain if he gives us a constitution and keeps his army?

If he gives us schools and exiles the teachers? If he gives us freedom and denies it to the men who have won it—our brothers in the dungeons? No, we want *our* constitution, not the Czar's—a constitution with law and justice behind it, not an army.

Adr. Is it time? There is so much ignorance yet——

Kore. Ignorance! Where is it greater than among our masters? We suffer as much from their stupidity as their oppression. I hate the ass's head more than the tyrant's!

Adr. But the poor, illiterate peasants. Are they ready——

Kore. Viatka and Perm answer that! There, where they have been let alone, they have established the best governed provinces in Russia. But here, where ignorance is *protected*—do you know what will happen if Yaltowa is burnt? The peasants of Karitz will be led into the town to pillage and slaughter in the name of Christ.

Adr. [*In horror*] Karitz! My poor people! I must go there at once.

Kore. There? It is only because you are here that Lonz will not be led into it. [*Ironically*] Since you can't be everywhere, hadn't we better devise some other means for the protection of the people?

Adr. O, it is horrible!

Kore. More horrible than you dream. A good man can not know how bad the world is, for he can never get away from himself.

[*Re-enter Manlief*]

Manl. Come, Korelenko. We shall be too late.

Adr. He is not going.

Manl. No? I'll stiffen his heart. You don't know, do you, that your little Vera has been taken to Petrizoff?

Kore. [*Stares in amazement, and clutches Adrian*] Is this a lie?

Adr. She has been arrested.

Kore. You let her be taken?

Adr. I had no choice.

Kore. There is always a choice. You could have killed her. [*Breaks down*]

Manl. [*Touching him*] Come.

Kore. Yes! Go on! I'll come!

Manl. At Breshloff's. [*Exit*]

Kore. [*Savagely, starting up*] You would save his life knowing that!

Adr. What has Vera's misfortune—yours—mine—to do with an eternal principle?

Kore. Damn your principle! It will put us all into hell!

Adr. The princess may be able to do something for her. She——

Kore. You still believe in that spy? [*Adrian is silent. Korelenko looks at him*] Forgive me. You love her. No! If you knew what love is you would help me!

Adr. [*Going to him as he reaches the door*] Wait. I do know. I love her even as you love Vera, and I swear to you that if she stood in Vera's place my answer would be the same.

Kore. [*Abstractedly*] You love her. [*Starts suddenly away*]

Adr. You will stay now, Sasha?

Kore. Now? No. There is something to do now.

[*Exit*]

Adr. Light, light, O my God!

[*Door opens, right centre, and a woman appears*]

Woman. Can you come to Catherine Vetrova now, sir?

[*Adrian bows his head and follows her out. Vasil, who has been sitting behind the little table rear, at times listening eagerly, at times overcome, rises and moves slowly forward, carrying his violin*]

Vasil. [*Repeats softly*] "As impersonal as the universe."

[*Strikes two or three notes on the violin and stops, terrified. Dashes the instrument down and throws himself to the floor, sobbing*] O, Vera! Vera! Vera!

[*Curtain*]

SCENE 2. *The same.* *Vasil still lying on the floor. Adrian enters right, crosses and attempts to rouse him.*

Adr. You must go to bed, my son. There is nothing for you to do.

Vasil. [*Rising*] Nothing for me to do? Why am I in the world then?

Adr. To be our light—our song—to find our angels for us.

Vasil. [*Looking down at his violin*] It is broken.

Adr. [*Picking it up*] You will mend it.

Vasil. And the heart too? [*Goes to table, left front, and sits by it, despondent and thoughtful*] We were wrong to-day, Adrian. I was wrong. No one has a right to happiness while others are suffering because of things that are in the *power of man* to help. The good people who forget what is out of sight, as if misery—or duty—were a question of eyes and ears, they are the most to blame. [*Rises*] If they would all help—just all of the good. [*Goes to door, rear, and stands a moment looking out*] The princess dances at the ball to-night.

Adr. My boy!

Vasil. [*Coming back to Adrian*] But they will not all help—not yet. Perhaps the world of peace must come before the world of love, not out of it . . . as war has come before peace. The law of Moses was once the best law. His race saved itself by it. Has the day of its necessity passed, Adrian? Are we sure?

Adr. It has passed for the man.

Vasil. But humanity is so far behind the man.

Adr. [*Gently*] That is what made Christ.

Vasil. And that is what killed him!

[*Enter a priest, street door*]

Priest. Blessed be this house.

Adr. Welcome, father.

Priest. Is death here?

Adr. Yes, father. [*Crosses to right and opens door for priest to enter*] You have many visits to make to-night.

Priest. Many, my son. [*Stops before Adrian*] I have a message for the Shepherd of Lonz.

Adr. [*Taking letter*] Thank you, father.

Priest. Thank her that sent it, and God who made her heart. [*Passes into room, right*]

Adr. [*After looking over letter*] The princess has danced to some purpose, my boy. Vera is free. She will be on her way to Odessa by morning.

Vasil. Free? The princess saved her? My princess! Did she write it? [*Taking letter*] I will read it with kisses!

Adr. It must be burnt.

Vasil. No, let me keep it—a little while.

Adr. We must be careful. Hush—some one is coming.

[*Vasil retreats to table, rear. Enter Korelenko in great agitation*]

Kore. Yaltowa is on fire! We are one night too late! They must have heard——

Adr. On fire? Now?

Kore. I waited with Gregorief at Breshloff's, the others went on to Yaltowa, where——

Adr. You waited for Petrizoff?

Kore. This ball was only to cover their scheme——

Adr. You waited with Gregorief for Petrizoff?

Kore. He will pass through the village about four o'clock.

Adr. But now—O, you are saved from that thing!

Kore. Yes. If we kill him now the fire will seem only a part of the deed. It will help them fix the lie upon us.

Adr. Too late, thank God!

Kore. You think of nothing but Petrizoff! What of the people now dying in Yaltowa? Dying because he lives? Go see the horrors there! The reactionists are everywhere in the streets, disguised as revolutionists, looting and murdering! Your Karitz peasants are being turned into beasts——

[Adrian gives a deep groan and sits overcome, by table front, left]

Kore. It is not too late! Our friends—Russia—freedom—yet may live if you will help us! Your name will justify Petrizoff's death to the world. With the loss of their chief the reactionists will be in confusion, before they can recover you can organize the great leagues into a militia——

Adr. You are mad to think such power is in me.

Kore. You don't know your power! You can do it—you only—and it must be done now—before the war in the East is over—before the Czar can make new promises—give us the mockery of a constitution, and fool half of us back to allegiance—before——

Adr. *[Rising, shaken]* It can not rest with me. One man can not make destiny.

Kore. Yes, when that man is you—when the time is now! Absolutism is at its ebb. Will you wait till the tide gathers and flows over us again in waves of blood?

Adr. *[To himself, walking]* Are there then two codes? One for the man, one for the race? And when they conflict, the man must yield?

Kore. Codes! The question of a man's right to his breath is settled outside of ethics! O, Adrian, brother,

be a man to-night and not a preacher! Never in the history of the world has there been a revolution so ripe, so terrible, without a leader to march at its head.

Adr. Humanity has dropped the club. It will drop the gun. Even the soldiers are throwing it down. And shall *I* pick it up——

Kore. Only for a day! Petrizoff alone stands between us and the army. Vitelkin, the next in power, is ready to join us. But he is suspected already, and must soon resign—or be poisoned. If we remove Petrizoff *now* thirty regiments will come to us with Vitelkin, and others will follow until the Czar is without an army. In a month—a fortnight—the revolutionists will be masters of the nation——

Adr. Masters of the nation! [*Walks away, and returns, much calmer, to Korelenko*] If it is true that only the life of Petrizoff stands between the revolutionists and triumph, he can not long be the sole barrier. He must see his folly and change his——

Kore. [*Furious*] Were he to turn angel now, he should die for his past sins!

Adr. [*Sadly*] I see. We should unfetter the avenging lion, not loosen the dove of peace, with Petrizoff's death.

Kore. I did not mean that. You know it was the anger of a moment. [*Kneeling*] For the last time I beg you—in the name of all that redeems man from the beast——

Adr. [*Very pale*] Rise, Korelenko. Heal ye first yourselves. Out of your differences, your divisions, you make your master. If for one day enmity should sleep, if for one day every lover of freedom should love his neighbor, in that day the oppressor would fall. Rise! I will not do it.

Kore. [*Springing up*] You will!

Adr. Will?

Kore. Yes. The princess Sophie Travinski is betrayed to Petrizoff. I hoped to prevail without telling you, and spare your heart what mine suffers.

Adr. Betrayed?

Kore. She has aided to-night in the escape of a prisoner taken by Petrizoff's order. He will know all by morning *if he lives*.

Adr. This lie will not tempt me, Sasha. I can hardly believe you have uttered it. [*Fearfully*] I might have believed you.

Kore. I am prepared for your doubt. Gregorief waits outside. He will support my word [*going to door*].

Adr. No! I will not see him again. It is true. [*Crosses uncertainly and sits on bench before loom*] O, is there no end to this night?

Kore. A princess Ghedimin went to Yakutsk for a lesser offence.

Adr. Don't—don't speak.

Kore. [*After watching him a moment*] If Petrizoff dies he will never know.

Adr. There is no time to warn her.

Kore. Then the evidence will go to Petrizoff at once.

Adr. You would do that?

Kore. No, but Gregorief would. He is waiting for your answer.

Adr. My answer?

Kore. You know how to save her.

Adr. [*Rising*] How?

Kore. Join us.

Adr. [*Sinking down again*] You might be merciful now, Korelenko.

Kore. [*Unbelievably*] You will not save her?

Adr. Not that way.

Kore. There is no other.

Adr. Then she——

Kore. Adrian, I can not believe you. You will save her!

Adr. How can I now? The struggle is over. For a heavenly motive I refused to join you; I can not consent

now for an earthly one. O, if you had not told me! If you had pleaded a little longer— [*Realizes what he is saying, and looks at Korelenko with a bitter smile*] You see it is impossible.

Kore. [*Raging*] I will kill you!

Adr. Do, Sasha.

Kore. [*Turning from him*] Vera! My little girl!

Adr. [*Rising suddenly*] O, I have not told you——

Kore. What? Quick!

Adr. Vera is free. Read this—where—Vasil, the letter!

[*Vasil, who sits by the small table, silently lays the letter upon it. Korelenko crosses and snatches it up*]

Adr. [*As Korelenko reads*] You see they will wait for you on the Petoff road until two o'clock. You must go at once. The princess has arranged for you to journey with Vera if you wish, and you must now, for to remain here means imprisonment on the Yaltowa charge. [*Korelenko is dumb, looking at the letter*] Don't lose hope, Sasha. You can still help us in America—perhaps do more for the cause there than here—and you will have Vera——

Kore. [*Strangely*] You *must* save her now, Adrian.

Adr. She is saved. Haven't you read? Don't you see?

Kore. Not Vera, the princess. It was I who betrayed her. And it was Vera she saved. I was so sure of you. You said——

Adr. I am sorry for you, Korelenko. You have sold the angel in your service.

Kore. No! You did it! You deceived me! You swore you loved her!

Adr. I swore the truth.

Kore. Bah! Such love! Prove it! Prove it! [*Hurries to the little cabinet in wall, rear, unlocks it, takes out a bomb from his pocket, places it in the cabinet, locks the door and returns to Adrian with key*] Prove it! I am going to Vera. Gregorief will wait at Breshloff's. Send him this

key within an hour and he will know what to do. [*Offers key to Adrian, who looks at him silently. Korelenko throws key to the floor*] There it is! Send it, or her fate will be on your soul, not mine! [*Exit*]

Adr. O, Infinite Love, why didst make us as men to try us as gods? . . . And I might have saved her. Might? . . . [*Goes slowly to the key, stoops and picks it up. As he raises his head his glance falls on the portrait of the Saviour on wall in front of him*] Unto seventy times seven. [*He drops the key and takes a step or two toward the picture*] Thou too wert man! . . . [*As he gazes at the portrait Vasil comes softly forward, takes up the key, returns to table, and sits looking at the key as if fascinated. Curtain*]

ACT III

SCENE 1. *Same room. Vasil asleep on bench, rear, left. Adrian watching by him.*

Adr. If I had saved him this day . . . this night! But now . . . what peace can heal him? [*Rises and walks*] Lord, Lord, from out these burning days, let one, just one, go free! As thou lovest thy world, let him be spared, let him be spared!

[*Enter Sophie, street door. Adrian looks at her uncomprehendingly. She crosses to him*]

Adr. Why have you come?

Soph. To warn you!

Adr. The boy—do not wake him.

[*Sophie crosses to left, rear, Adrian following. She looks down at Vasil, stoops and tenderly kisses him, then moves away with Adrian. Vasil opens his eyes and looks after them*]

Adr. The last two hours have been terrible, but he rests now.

Soph. You must take him with you.

Adr. With me?

Soph. I have come from the ball.

Adr. I see.

Soph. Orloff is a very weak man. I found out that you are to be arrested to-night.

Adr. It has come then.

Soph. Is Korelenko going with Vera?

Adr. I hope so. He has gone to meet her.

Soph. Then you can't take his place. We must think of some other way—and quickly.

Adr. Not for me. It is you who must go. You are betrayed to Petrizoff.

Soph. I hoped you wouldn't hear that. I am in no danger.

Adr. [*Between fear and relief*] No danger?

Soph. [*With a half smile*] By and by you will believe that I can take care of myself.

[*Enter Korelenko with Vera*]

Soph. Not gone?

Adr. You are lost.

Soph. Why did you bring her back? You have no right to destroy *her* life!

Vera. I would not go. My place is with Alexander. [*Softly*] You ought to understand that, princess.

Soph. [*To Korelenko*] She is a child. She did not know. You should have gone with her.

Kore. Your highness, that was impossible.

Soph. It was not! All was prepared——

Kore. [*To Adrian*] Does she know?

Soph. That I am betrayed? Yes, but the man entrusted with the evidence happened to be a devoted servant of my own— [*Alexander groans*] He will fall! And you—Adrian—what is the matter?

Kore. [*Steadying himself against the loom and clasping Vera*] I have thrown our lives away—mine and Vera's—that is all.

Soph. Why couldn't you go with her?

Kore. Because it was I who betrayed you. And could I accept life and love at your hands?

Soph. [*Shrinking*] You? But why——

Kore. I can not answer. Come, Vera, to your grandmother.

[*Exeunt Korelenko and Vera, right, centre*]

Soph. O, why did he do it?

Adr. I can tell you.

Soph. Then why?

Adr. Because he believed— O, Sophie, beloved, before I speak, look at me with the love in your eyes as I saw it first. I did not know it was for me then. Let me see it now while I know you are mine—mine! Yes, yes, you love me!

Soph. Ah, Adrian, I am afraid I love nothing else.

[*Vasil covers his eyes with his arm*]

Adr. And you will kiss me once?

Soph. Once?

Adr. As if we were parting forever, Sophie. [*She embraces and kisses him. He moves away from her*] Now I will tell you why Alexander could not answer you, and why I can. He betrayed you believing that I could and would save you.

Soph. And you——

Adr. Could, but would not.

Soph. [*Moving back*] What are you saying, Adrian?

Adr. I could have saved you but I would not. Isn't it clear?

Soph. [*Moving back till she stands in dim light*] No—I don't——

Adr. I would not consent to Petrizoff's death.

Soph. [*Lifting her head*] O! [*Regarding him steadily*] You refused your consent when you knew that his death would save me?

Adr. [*Lowering his eyes*] I did.

Soph. He, a murderer, whose death has been justly due a thousand times, and I, innocent, the woman you say you love——

Adr. [*Bowing his head, not meeting her look*] I have told you the truth.

Soph. And that is why we part forever?

Adr. That is why.

Soph. Because I could not forgive you?

Adr. No. I should want more than forgiveness. I should want you to understand.

Soph. That you were right?

Adr. Yes.

Soph. And I couldn't understand?

Adr. [*Still hopelessly, not looking at her*] No.

Soph. [*Coming nearer*] And we part forever? [*He makes no answer. She comes nearer*] Forever? [*He is still silent. She comes near enough to turn his face to hers*] Forever, Adrian?

Adr. Sophie! [*Takes her in his arms*]

Soph. O, do you think I will ever leave you now?

Adr. You *do* understand!

Soph. [*Smiling*] That I can never be in your way? You will always sacrifice me first? Yes, I knew that all the time, but you didn't.

Adr. And it makes no difference?

Soph. How can it when I love you?

Adr. I wonder if *God* understands women.

Soph. O, some of them. The rest He made to puzzle over when eternity hangs on His hands.

Adr. [*Kissing her*] Heaven-heart!

Soph. [*Releasing herself*] That must wait. We haven't a minute——

[*They hear steps outside, and stand waiting. Orloff and two guards enter*]

Orl. It is my turn to be surprised, your highness. I suppose you are here to assure *this* prisoner of safety.

Soph. What prisoner?

Orl. Adrian Lavrov.

[*Guards put fetters on Adrian's wrists*]

Adr. For what crime am I arrested?

Orl. [*To guards*] Keep him here until I return.

Adr. For what crime?

Orl. For crime sufficient.

Adr. I insist upon knowing.

Orl. You will know soon enough—in the next world. They say everything is known there.

Soph. He is ashamed to tell you. You are arrested as chief instigator in the burning of Yaltowa.

Adr. Is it possible?

Soph. More than possible. It is so. That is the crime you will die for unless you are rescued by a rising of the people.

Adr. That must not be!

Orl. Don't worry. We are giving your friends enough to think about.

[*Sophie has gradually neared the door. Orloff steps before her*]

Orl. Pardon me, your highness. You invited me into your carriage a few hours ago. I beg to return the courtesy.

Soph. Let me pass!

Orl. You will leave here only under my escort.

Soph. I know where I shall die then.

Orl. You have cost me one prisoner.

Soph. What proof have you?

Orl. None—yet. But I know it.

Soph. O wonderful sagacity!

Orl. And I shall lay my reasons before Petrizoff.

Soph. I suppose you believe, too, that I would rescue the Shepherd of Lonz?

Orl. I shall at least not lose sight of him until he is in prison. [*Sophie turns her back upon Orloff*] You must come with me or stay here under guard. I don't promise you as pleasant a journey as you gave me, for I shall not be at so much trouble to please. I shall not even ask you to let me repeat the little kiss——

Soph. Sir!

Orl. On your hand, which you so kindly permitted. [*Sophie again attempts to pass him*] Will your highness take my arm to the carriage? We have only a short distance to drive before meeting Petrizoff. [*Looking at his watch*] He ought to be almost here.

Soph. I will stay here.

Orl. In shackles?

Soph. [*Holding out her arms*] Yes.

Orl. Stay then. But I will not bind you.

Soph. No, I might not forgive you *that* if it turns out that you have made a fool's mistake.

Orl. There is no mistake, as you will learn after I have seen Petrizoff. [*To guards*] No conversation between prisoners. [*To Sophie*] Let me assure you that *these* guards can be trusted. [*Exit*]

[*Adrian sits in the large chair, a guard stationed on each side of him. Sophie sits on low stool before him, and lays her head upon his knees*]

A guard. [*Anxiously*] It is not permitted to communicate——

Soph. Then don't, sir!

[*Silence for a moment, then the noise of horses approaching*]

Soph. Ah—Petrizoff!

[*Vasil rises cautiously. The guards have their backs to him and the door. He stands on the bench, unlocks cabinet, takes out the bomb, puts it under his blouse, and goes softly out*]

Adr. Sophie—Sophie—you do not regret——

Soph. No, no! Don't, Adrian! Forget all but love—love—love! This is the last—the last——

[*Sound of trampling without, shrieks and noises. They start and listen. Korelenko runs through the room from right and out at street door. Vera comes on after him. Adrian and Sophie rise and look questioningly at each*

other. The guards lift their weapons. Adrian looks toward bench and sees that Vasil is gone]

Adr. Vasil! [*To Vera*] Is he in there?

Vera. No, Adrian.

Adr. He has gone out. He will be hurt. [*Looks suddenly at cabinet, which is open*] Who has been here? Gregorief? [*Stares at cabinet. Sophie's gaze follows his. He turns to her, speaking slowly*] There was a bomb in that cabinet. Could it be possible—that——

Soph. [*Gently*] I am afraid it is true.

Adr. Never! Not him!

Soph. Adrian! Beloved!

Adr. [*Not heeding her*] Vasil! Vasil! [*Staggers to seat by table, front, left. Guards keep by him. Enter Korelenko followed by Gregorief and others*]

Vera. [*Running to Korelenko*] Vasil—where is he?

[*Korelenko is silent*]

Soph. Is he hurt?

Kore. The boy—or——

Soph. The boy.

Kore. Not hurt, but taken.

[*Adrian throws his fettered arms upon the table and lays his face upon them*]

Soph. Is Petrizoff dead?

Kore. Only a wound. This night belongs to hell. O, if it could have been as we planned!

Soph. No one is killed?

Kore. No one but Orloff.

Soph. Orloff dead! [*Under her breath*] Then I am safe.

Kore. Gods, if only it had been Petrizoff! His escape is unbelievable. [*Turning to Adrian*] What says the preacher now?

Soph. Don't! See his fetters?

Kore. Ah! When——

Greg. [*Crossing to Adrian*] Fortunate man! Now he may develop his soul!

Soph. How can you?

Greg. How could *he*, madam? How could *he*? Do you know what he has done? He has killed every man that died in Yaltowa to-night—he has slaughtered every child—he has outraged every woman! What else? Freedom offered him her hand and he struck her to earth! He has scattered her forces—he has strengthened her oppressor—and the rivers of blood that must now drench Russia shall flow from his door! But—ha! ha! he has saved his soul!

[*Enter Irtenieff*, attended]

Irtenieff. I want the prisoner, Adrian Lavrov. [*No one answers. He sees Adrian and crosses to him*] What is your crime? [*Adrian does not raise his head*]

Soph. None.

Irten. You are arrested for the burning of Yaltowa? All prisoners taken on that charge are free by the order of Petrizoff.

Soph. Take off his chains!

[*At a sign from Irtenieff guards unfetter Adrian, who does not seem to know what they are doing*]

Kore. Such an order from Petrizoff? What does it mean?

Irten. It means that he is frightened into saying his prayers for a day or two.

Soph. Adrian, my dear one, look up!

Irten. [*To Korelenko*] And if you've a particular regard, as I've heard, for the little beauty there, you'd better get her out of Russia before his scare rubs off.

Kore. Thank you, sir.

[*Exeunt Irtenieff, men, and guards left by Orloff. Dawn has been gradually breaking, showing through door and window, rear. Sophie continues to talk softly to Adrian and finally he raises his head*]

Adr. They will bury the sunshine of the world—shut up his golden years in darkness——

Soph. We will free him, Adrian. We will live to set him free.

[*Zarkoff, and Vasil guarded, appear at door*]

Zarkoff. [*Stepping in*] Now show your accomplices. [*Vasil stands on the threshold, silent, looking eagerly at the faces in the room*] You swore you would tell who helped you if we brought you here.

Vasil. I will.

Zar. [*Pointing to Gregorief*] Is he one?

Vasil. Let me take my time. You wouldn't hurry on your way to Schlusselfburg, would you? I must speak to my friends first. Adrian—father, brother, master—the songs have all come back. When I only looked on, doing nothing to help, the music stopped, but now——

Zar. Too many words, sir!

Vasil. Now I am doing my part, I have a right to my song. They will take me to——

Zar. Stop that!

Vasil. And under the stormy waters my heart will be singing——

Zar. Say your good-bys, and be done!

Vasil. Put your ear to my violin, and you will hear——

Zar. Come!

Vasil. You must yield something too, Adrian. Step back to the law of Moses for vantage if you can leap to Christ with the world in your arms.

Zar. You have broken your oath!

Vasil. I have not. I will tell you.

Zar. Speak then. Who are your confederates?

Vasil. There is but one.

Zar. Who? Where is he?

Vasil. He is here—in this room—he is in every prison in Russia—he is in every heart that knows the meaning of love—but if you want to arrest him [*stepping back into the sunlight and pointing upward*] you must go up there, for he is God.

Zar. That for your blasphemy! [*Strikes Vasil on the mouth with his sword*] Off with him!

[*Guards take Vasil off. Zarkoff follows. Silence broken by a groan from Adrian*]

Soph. Beloved, beloved, he shall be free! The whole world shall help us!

Greg. May we knock down the prisons now, Lavrov?

Adr. O God, in all thy ages can this be justified?

Kore. You can justify it in a moment. Adrian Lavrov, this is your call to war. If you respond, his life is well lost.

Adr. War? [*Staggers up*] Yes. And I will use the strongest of earthly weapons, the arms of peace. The powers that upbuild are as invincible as the universe. By them it stands. Only by their toleration do the forces of destruction live. Toleration? Only by the *support* of the powers of peace do the powers that destroy exist. Is not the army of the Czar fed by us, clothed by us, paid by us? And if we refuse to give, must it not beg of us? If he who works not shall not eat, what is the doom of the destroyer? The sower shall not sow for him, the reaper shall not reap for him, the builder shall not build for him, the physician shall not heal him, the scholar shall not teach him, the lawyer shall not plead for him, no trade shall supply him, no craft shall assist him, no art shall amuse him. The mills shall be silent, the wheels shall not turn, the wires shall be dumb, until he cries out

"Peace, thou art master: let me be so much as thy servant!"

A revolutionist. Right! This, too, is war!

Adr. Yes. The new war of a new day. Not in madness hurling bombs, but giving our pity as we take our right.

Man. And who will pay your soldiers of peace? Must not their women and children eat?

Adr. The money we now pay to our brothers to strike us shall put bread in our mouths.

A revolutionist. Keep the taxes!

Man. You join us at last!

Adr. No. We join each other . . . under the only unconquerable power. Gather an army and go forth with guns, and you may be laid in the dust. But the gathered forces of peace are as the fingers on God's hand, one with His strength, one with His will. Friends, friends, we have been searching earth for the weapon already in our grasp. The woman at the loom, the mujik in the field, the workman on the housetop, the man at the wire, the throttle, the wheel, hold it in their hands. To know its might—to use it together—that is all. *Together!* O, they must see it—as I do now! I will gather my disciples, we will knock at every door and preach the gospel of united peace until all our unions are one union, all our bodies one body, with one breath, one heart, one head. In barin and peasant, mechanic and noble, Christian and Jew, Finn, Pole, Czech, Serb, Georgian, Tatar, must be born as in one man the conscious strength of peace. And to its deliverance I give my life, my soul! [*Sits down. Sophie leans over him*] . . . Yes . . . he shall be free.

Greg. [*Who has been searching Vasil's violin, comes forward with a paper in his hand*] They shall all be free!

We will make no terms, we will accept no constitution, till every dungeon door be open, till we hold in our arms the brothers who have made freedom no longer a dream of the night but a song of the morning! To them we owe the liberty that is dawning, and shall we tread the earth they give us while they perish beneath it? Hear our latest martyr—the youngest of us all. Hear the “Voice of Schlüsselburg!”

[*Reads*]

We are deep, we are deep
Beneath your swift feet
That pass and yet pass
With unfaltering beat;
But life has no sound
That can deaden our moans,
And no measure of ground
Can bury our bones,
Can bury our bones.

We have given ye all
But our lingering breath,—
The light from our eyes,
The prayer at our death.
The wine of the days,
Drink it up, drink it up!
But our hearts, as the grape,
We pressed for the cup,
We pressed for the cup.

Through the measureless sun
Your seasons shall sway.
Pluck the fruit as your own,
Ye have nothing to pay;

THE SHEPHERD

For your summers of bloom
Are the summers we've lost,
And we in our tomb,
We pay the red cost,
We pay the red cost.

Your youths shall be wed
And the maids shall be fair,
But the tears we have shed
Are the pearls they shall wear;
Your bride ye shall seek
As never we could,
But the rose on her cheek,
It is dyed with our blood,
It is dyed with our blood.

The lips of your child
Shall be warm on your own,
But 'tis cold, it is cold,
Where our babes lie alone.
The hand of your friend
In yours ye shall take,
But look ye!—the scar
Ours wear for his sake,
Ours wear for his sake.

The feast shall be spread
And the world shall be there,
But set at the head
Our invisible chair.
Ay, the banquet is ours,
For our dishes make room!
Each baked by the fires
Of a smouldering home,
Of a smouldering home.

We are deep, we are deep
 Beneath your swift feet
That pass and yet pass
 With unfaltering beat;
But life has no sound
 That can deaden our moans,
And no measure of ground
 Can bury our bones,
 Can bury our bones.

[*Curtain*]



THE SIEGE

A DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

DIONYSIUS, *the Younger, tyrant of Syracuse*

DION, *a Syracusan noble*

ARISTOCLES, *the Athenian friend of Dion*

OCRATES, *a young lord, attached to Dion*

HERACLIDES, *admiral of Syracuse*

PHILLISTUS, *an ambitious courtier*

CALLORUS, ÆGISTHUS, *friends of Heraclides*

SPEUSIPPUS, *from Athens, friend of Aristocles*

PANTHUS, *captain of Dion's Grecian guards*

DOMENES, *captain of the tyrant's guards*

TIMOLEON, ASCANDER, *lords of Syracuse*

GYLIPPUS, MENODES, DRACON, *citizens*

BRENTIO, *slave to Dion*

TICHUS, *slave to Aristocles*

ARATEA, *wife of Dion*

NAURESTA, *a noble lady*

THEANO, *daughter of Nauresta*

METHONE, *woman to Nauresta*

Soldiers, citizens, messengers, dancers, &c.

SCENE: *Syracuse, Sicily*

TIME: *356 B. C.*

ACT I

SCENE 1. *A pavilion in vineyard near Dion's house.*

Enter Dion and Aristocles, followed by Brentio and Tichus.

Dion. That Dionysius bends the neck of pomp
To do you honor, shows an eye yet false
To your true merit.

Aris. But 'tis better, Dion,
Than to have found his frowning archers planted
Point to our landing ship.

Dion. He'd not have dared
To greet you so, but this vain, strutting show
Wrongs you no less.

Aris. Himself far more.

Dion. Ay, friend.
The mines of earth into one coffer poured
Would not enrich a spendthrift or insure
Him linen for a shroud. If you can not
Prevail with him— If? Nay, you will. All ifs
Lie down before your wooing argument.

Aris. I knew his father when the years had stripped
His agued soul, and his untutored age
Looked from a crabbed eye upon the world.
For him I would not have a second time
Foregone Athenian groves, but youth that keeps
An open door to Wisdom as to Folly,
May even of Virtue make at last a guest.

Dion. My hope is born again, now you are here.
 When I have seen pick-thank philosophers
 At ear of Dionysius, seeding his mind—
 Wherein my toil had set fair Ceres' garden—
 With foul and flaunting weeds to overrun
 My country, I have been tempted to forego
 The idle reaping, uplay the soil itself,
 And with some few and trusted followers
 Rouse a new Spring to breed us gracious harvest.

Aris. But he who strikes at heritage gives riot
 Fair leave to play above his trampled grave,
 And rather than usurp a wrong with right,
 You bend your strength to make the wrong a virtue.

Dion. Ay, so the young tyrant has my knee, but thus
 To keep my mind at bow and flexure proves
 My patience 'fore the gods. Welcome the day
 When I may honor Truth in honoring
 The head of rule in my belovéd city!
 But now no more of state austerities;
 I would be glad one hour and nurse the joy
 Of seeing thee. Thou'st brought me half my heart
 That kept with thee in Athens.

[*Enter Brentio*]

Well?

Bren. My lord,
 The mistress comes.

Dion. In happy season.

Aris. Mistress?

Dion. My wife.

Aris. Art married, Dion?

Dion. Since you sailed;
 To Aratea, Dionysius' sister,
 But as unlike him as the eternal sky
 To moody ocean.

Aris. Married? That the word?

Dion. Fast bound, indeed, to one who will not break
Our souls' knit circle. She is Virtue's servant,
And wears her fairest flower, beauty.

Tich. [*Aside, as Dion looks off left to see if Aratea approaches*] Ha!

A beauty! I will warrant it. There be
Some ugly wives i' the world but no man married 'em.

Dion. [*To Brentio*] Come, sir. What entertainment is
provided?

[*Dion talks aside with slave*]

Aris. So goes my friend. He who was happiest lost
In the vast solitude of a noble book,
Or Truth's deep-pathed discourse. A wife. Is this
My journey's end? That little haven whence
No harbored sail dares sea? Port of delay,
And pocket of emprise, whose shallows oft
Have sunk the mightiest hope of greatest states!

[*Enter a servant*]

Ser. [*To Dion*] My lord, the captain of the harbor
waits.

Dion. [*To Aristocles*] One moment, friend.

[*Exit, right*]

Aris. That lordly soul a-dream
In woman's arms! That heaven-cleaving mind
At fireside tattle with a gossip dame!
Now comes the sunward ranging eagle down
To sit by nest, a tame prudential spouse.
Where sped the proud ambassador of morn
On wings that clipped the burning orient,
Hovers the cautious mate at pains to find
A youngling's breakfast.

[*Re-enter Dion*]

Dion. Come, my friend. You're skilled
In harbor matters, and I need your word.

[*Exeunt Dion and Aristocles, right*]

Bren. Is your wise man married?

Tich. That's a fool's question.

Bren. True, but— Peace! Yonder comes the mistress. I must be off. “Entertainment,” quoth my lord. Which means a gentle sally of honest nymphs, and a sort of mild, virtuous music at hide-and-seek in the vineyard. You must to court if you would know how wenches can trip in Sicily. Come, brother stranger. I'll take care o' your enjoyments. You shall see us with both eyes, I promise you.

[*Exeunt Brentio and Tichus. Enter, left, Aratea, Theano, Nauresta, Ocrastes and Phillistus*]

Ara. I'm not convinced, Phillistus. Who may search
The wreckage 'neath a smile, or count the tears
Deep in a stoic eye? Let us believe
Aristocles is not in nature cold
As his philosophy.

Oc. I'll freeze my sword
A winter night, then warm his heart by 't. Cold!

The. You've seen him?

Oc. At the landing.

The. Now we hear!

What is this marvel like?

Oc. A frozen god.

Apollo cast in snow.

Phil. Sicilian suns

Are warm.

Oc. He's proof 'gainst sun. Why, he doth cool
His liver with his blood,—hath not a stir
Of whetted sense, be 't anger, love or pain,
To prick him mortal.

Ara. He is young to be
So true a sage.

The. They come. Prepare, O eyes,
To wonder!

[*Re-enter Dion and Aristocles*]

Ara. [*Advancing*] Welcome, noble Athenian.
Your fame has oft made voyage to our shore,
And we rejoice that now you follow it.
Please know my friends.

Dion. [*To Aratea, as Aristocles greets the others*]

Why is Phillistus here?

Are we so poor, my dame, the enemy
Must sauce our feast? Nay, nay!

Ara. I hope, my lord,
My brother's subjects are not enemies.

Phil. [*Who has stood apart, approaches Aristocles*] Welcome to Sicily, although your breath is somewhat frosty for our warmer pleasures.

Ara. [*As Dion frowns*] The frost that draws the poison, saves the flower, you mean, my good Phillistus.

Aris. A fair interpreter!

Phil. Ay, when we know not our meaning, let a woman find it.

Oc. Which she will do the more readily if we mean nothing.

The. True, her wit is generous. She'll always bait a hook that angles painfully.

Oc. Though she, good soul, must hang herself upon it.
[*Theano and Ocrastes move aside, bantering. Aratea turns to Phillistus and Nauresta*]

Dion. [*To Aristocles*] Ocrastes is a youth full dear to me. Orphaned at birth, I've bred him from a babe. He is of bravest heart, and must leap high Although he fall o'er heaven.

Aris. And the maid?

Dion. The daughter of my brother some years dead. Her bloom might make e'en priestly blood forget To pace with vows, but she is true, and kneels To wisdom's star. Hast yet no eye for woman?

Aris. For all things fair. That is my staff 'gainst age.
We're young so long as we love beauty.

[*Aratea moves to Dion and Aristocles, leaving Nauresta and Phillistus together*]

Nau.

See

This feathered snuggery?

Phil.

A vine-lark's nest.

Nau. Touch 't not. We'll lose a song by you. 'Tis
strange

These dare-wings build about our heads, when they
So fear us.

Phil. Farther. Birds are not my study.

[*They move aside*]

Nau. Frowning again, my lord?

Phil.

And reason for it.

I like not yonder pairing.

[*Looks at Theano and Ocrastes*]

Nau.

Would that your plans

Might leave them happy!

Phil.

False? I'll not believe it

Of thee, Nauresta. I've given thee confidence

As open as the ungated dawn; unlocked

My secrets; fixed within your breast, as in

My own, my darling purpose!

Nau.

'Twas my counsel

In Aratea's ear that brought you hither.

And why these dark reproaches where I hoped

To see the color of your gratitude?

Phil. What's done, though ne'er so well, but makes
a way

For what's to do, Nauresta.

Nau.

Ah, my lord,

I know not how to please you.

Phil.

Learn. To me

Be wax, and adamant to all touch else.
Mad Dionysius is in revels lost;
Dion is far too stern for common love;
Between the two my hope makes fair ascent
Above the clouds of state. 'Tis I must reign.
Then we, my queen, must see our daughter wed
To some strong noble who will prop our power.
Ocrastes' love is bound inseverably
To Dion. Keep him from Theano, sweet.
Look on them now. See how she bends to him?

Nau. Nay, she is modest, sir.

Phil. But mark! He speaks,
And crimson runs her cheek, as though his voice
Did paint it magically, which bids him fair,
For know you not that love on blushes feeds
As plundering bees on roses? He is sure!
'Twill task you hard to ward from port who bears
So bold a sail.

Nau. But I will do it. Ay!

Phil. Again you are all mine! [*Nauresta moves to Theano and Ocrastes*] Thus do I woo
The mother, with the daughter in my eye.

Ara. [*To Aristocles*] Ah, yes, I know you'll cast fond
sighs toward Athens,
And in the night look through the dark to her—
A myrtle-crownéd bride without her lord—
But yet our land, too poor in Ceres' smile
To outwoo Acadème, may show some charm
To ease your banishment.

Aris. O, 'tis an isle
That 'neath the eye of Zeus might bloom nor blush
Save at his praise; yet holds within itself
Treasure that ornaments its cruder worth
As gems make eyes in stone,—a friend whose hand

Leads Virtue's own, and woman's beauty crowned
By starry mind as I ne'er hoped to see
Till at the port of the immortal world
My eyes should meet my dreams.

Dion. What now? So soon,
Aristocles?

Ara. My lord?

Dion. I knew she'd find
The gate to your forgiveness.

Phil. [*Aside*] My tongue creaks
Amid this piping.

Dion. True, she's fair enough
For praise, but I'm a plain prose lover, friend,
Nor, like a doting osier o'er a brook,
Pore on her features, wasting oil of time
That should burn high in task of gods and state.

Phil. [*Aside*] I'll cast a pebble in this summer pool.
[*To Aristocles*] Sir, you will find our Dionysius worthy,
The proud descendant of a prouder sire,
Upholding well his shining heritage.

Aris. Worthy I hope he is, but even kings,
My lord, may wrap them in humility,
Nor boast descent, when demigods of earth
But bastards are in heaven.

Dion. Ay, some of us
Should curvet not so high, bethinking of
Our audience in the clouds; for this brave world
Is but a theatre whereto the gods
For pastime look, and whoso makes most show
Of plumes careering and proud-lifting stride
Is but the greatest anticker of all
To their high eyes. A little music, friends.

Phil. And in good time! A sermon then a song.

[*Enter dancers, the two in advance bearing urns which
they place on a small altar, singing*]

Bring cedar dark,
And ruby-wood,
Bring honeyed-bark,
The Naiad's food,
Till altar flame
And incense rise
In friendship's name
To seek the skies.

[*Chorus by maidens bearing wreaths of olive and laurel*]

Myrtle leave on Venus' tree,
Nor the Bacchic ivy see;
Olive bring, and laurel bough,
And may hours that gather now
Of his years fair token be!

[*They bow before Aristocles and continue dancing*]

Aris. [*Watching Aratea*] The sun has made a shrine of
her bright hair

Where eyes would worship, but her fairer face
Lures their devotion ere they gaze one prayer.

Phil. [*Crossing to Aristocles*] Aristocles, I swear yon
dancer's foot,

Curving the air, marks beauty of more worth
Than all the fantasies of dream you write
On heavens conjectural.

Dion. [*Angrily to Phillistus*] It suits you well
To treat the theme deific with bold tongue.
No thought so high but you would trick it out
In shrugging sophistry!

Phil. [*Going*] Farewell. The court
Has always welcome for me.

Dion. Farewell, my lord
And Ceres send you grace!

Phil. [*Turning*] Beware, proud Dion!
 The topmost limb makes an uneasy seat.
 Who perches there must take account of winds,
 Lest dignity go forfeit to surprise.
 By Jaso, sir, your cause is fallen sick,
 Nor Athens emptying all her wits may heal it!

[*Exit*]

Ara. My lord, a little patience——

Dion. Patience, madam!
 Would words were meat for swords! I'd had his crop!

[*Enter a royal messenger*]

Mess. Most noble Dion, greeting from the king.
 He begs you'll bring the Athenian sage to banquet,
 And see some shows within the royal gardens.

Dion. More revels! More? This cracks the very glass
 Of our fair prospect, wherein we saw him sit
 With listening ear to wisdom.

[*To messenger*] No!

Ara. My lord——

Dion. Say to the tyrant I'll not feast with him.

[*Exit messenger*]

Ara. May I be bold to say this is not well?
 I fear, my lord, your stern, imperious port
 Is much against you in our easeful city.
 If on occasion you would smooth your brow
 To patient lenience you in time would win
 All hearts to wear the livery of your purpose,
 That now shows cold and sober for their mood.

Dion. Not so! The bending tree ne'er kissed the
 clouds.

I will not stoop! What? Flaunt his sport before
 A sage's eye, who comes at his own suit
 To teach him truth?

Aris. Yet we must not forget
 Discourteous truth is hated; vehemence,

The whip of argument, but frights conviction.
Pardon so stale a word.

Ara. But 'tis so true!
The winding zephyr, not the hurrying gale,
Finds out the hidden rose. My brother's heart
Has yet a grain of good, which gentleness
May find and touch to life.

Dion. It was the slight,
The unseemly slight to you, Aristocles,
So chafed me.

Aris. Think but of our charge, my friend,
Fair Syracuse.

Dion. So, so! I say no more.
Your wisdom be to me Athene's shield
Whereby I'll see to strike this head of wrong
Nor be devoured. Come, we will walk abroad.
But not to court.

Aris. [*To Aratea*] My wishes wait on thee.
May Fortune dress thee for a second self
Till eyes mistaking seek thy face for hers.

Ara. Nay, let her wed thee, and like loving wife
Give all her portion, then empty-handed pluck
New grace from heaven to adorn thee still.

[*Exeunt Dion and Aristocles*]

Nau. Now, Aratea, the song of praise! Which of the
gods is he most like?

Ara. Like none of them. Jove is long-bearded, Nep-
tune has forgot to walk, Mercury is boyish, Apollo like
a woman, and Mars so heavy-footed he would stumble
mocking the grace of Aristocles!

Nau. 'Tis plain a curious eye will never take you to
Olympus, since you've seen the Athenian.

Ara. I own I have a sudden comfort from this gentle
sage.

Nau. What is it?

Ara. You know my Dion has one only fault.

Nau. O, all but perfect man!

Ara. He is so true that he is stern as truth.

Nau. That's truth indeed!

Ara. So just that he is harsh as Justice' self.

Nau. Another truth!

Ara. So good that——

Nau. What! More of this singular fault?

Ara. This Athens' tongue, so sweetly mediate,
Will lead the people's love unto my lord,
Who now upholds the state in thankless sort.
They honor and admire, but keep their hearts
For those who woo them! Ah, I blame them not.

Oc. Dion need borrow no Athenian tongue
To speak for him.

Nau. You'll hear no voice denies
Him perfect praise.

Oc. Who would deny it?

The. None,

Ocrastes, none. How like a gem unpriced
His rich simplicity doth shine amid
The purpled show of lords! It is as though
The sovereign alkahest, weary of law,
Had given the scornéd pebble leave to glow
The fairest eye of all the pearléd shore.

Ara. They'll sing us deaf, Nauresta, on this theme.
But come. [*Draws Nauresta away*] Come, madam, come!

We must prepare
Some good-wife pleasure for my lord's return.

[*Exeunt Aratea and Nauresta, left*]

Oc. [*Embracing Theano*] My love! At last! O goddess
Patience, how
Thou muffledst me! Time crept on thousand legs
And each one crippled.

The. Ay, so slow the hour

Moved to this golden now I thought each moment
Turned back to seek some loss and spent itself
A second time.

Oc. Now all the world's at morn.
How young we are, Theano! O, 'tis true
Life is at tick of dawn when love begins.

The. I'm older then than you, for I 'gan love
The day you won the laurel from proud Carthage.
In the wild race how like a shooting star
You made a heaven of earth's grosser air!
And 'twas that day I heard old warriors say
Your lance would dare prick ope the clouds till Mars
Looked forth to combat. Ah, I scarce believe
Our island's easy lap did bear you, and thank
The gods that wealth, whose poison-pampered tooth
Likes best the marrow-sweet of youth, has left
You still a man.

Oc. Truth weeps when lovers talk,
But where is sound more sweet? All that I am
I owe to Dion. Give to him the praise,
If praise is due, and you would please me best.

The. Thy approbation is my glass of merit,
And there alone am I arrayéd fair,
Yet for his sake, not yours, I love lord Dion.
'Tis wonder's hour in wonder's day he should
So fit his life, despite the careless time,
To please the gods.

Oc. When shall we tell him, love,
Of this new joy of ours?

The. My mother first.

Oc. Didst note her frown?
What has so changed her, sweet?

The. I find her troubled late, as she would soothe
Her breast above some panting mystery.

Oc. She must disclose the cause, and show if 't has

An honest face. I'll have no mincing doubts
And ghostly secrets peering on our love.

The. She is our gentle mother. Wait, my heart!

Oc. Phillistus is too often at her ear.

Have guard against him. In his smoothest words
He'll subtly seat a devil to confound you.

'Tis pity. Eloquence is the flute o' the soul,
Which virtue alone should play, for good or bad
It has immortal consequence.

The. He was

My father's friend, and well may be my mother's.

Oc. Ah, but he coos too near her widowed nest.

The. Ocrastes! Can you dare? My noble mother!
Whose sorrows sit like shadows in her eye?
Whose loyal breast asks no embrace less chill
Than the cold tomb where my dear father lies?

Oc. 'Twas but a word.

The. Unsay it, O, unsay it!

Oc. Ay, by our island's god, 'twas never spoken!

The. I've scarce a breath, Ocrastes.

Oc. And that breath

This kiss must drink. You will forgive? Speak not.
These clinging lips have told me. A kiss, Theano,
Unseals all secrets but to be their grave.

Then we know all, and all we know's forgot.

'Tis saying true, a kiss is worth the world,

When, having it, there's no world but a kiss.

[*Re-enter Nauresta and Aratea, left*]

Nau. [*Crossing to Theano*] Still here, my daughter?

[*Enter Brentio, right*]

Bren. O, mistress, the master is coming with Dionysius.
Since he would not take the Athenian to court, the court
is coming hither.

Oc. Here? 'Tis a strange declension of his pride.

Ara. I fear 'tis cover for a thrust 'gainst Dion.

Oc. No! Virtue such as his is heavened above
The reach of sceptres.

Ara. But he was too bold
In his refusal to attend the feast.
They come! And Dionysius' brow is like
A new, unclouded sun. No eyes for us!

[*Enter Dionysius, Aristocles, Dion, and lords*]

Diony. [*To Aristocles*] Speak on, nor cease t' enchant my
rouséd ear,

Although thy words, like honey from the isle
Where Ate fell, are something mixed with bitter.
But give me not to virtue suddenly,
Lest she disdain the greening, unripe fruit,
And from her sun I do forever fall.

Dion. Heed then his counsel, Dionysius.
A ruler is the state's bountificer,—
High warden at the gates of happy good,—
And when he turns unto himself the stream
That should make fair his country, he is damned
As oft a robber as his subjects count.
Each man he meets may claim his golden coat!

Diony. What's your rough meaning, sir?

Aris. 'Tis this, my lord.

Here is a land born in a dream of Nature,
And given to man to please her waking eyes
Until she thinks that yet she dreams. His task
To build the adorning temple, turn groves retired
To happy shades where wisdom meets with youth,
And with triumphant art set statued thought
To gleam abroad from every favored spot
Till e'en the flattered gods be tempted here
In marble fair to wait on mortal eyes,
And genius roam in generation free,
Breathing the constant good of mind aspiring,
Till not a clod, be it or earth or human,

But knows a smile to make itself more fair.
How should it grieve thee then to see the pomp
Of one, sole, only man heave with the weight
Of all the state, and wear in barren pride
The fertile beauty of his golden isle?

Diony. Divine Athenian, if I be that man,
Be thou the master of my realm till I
Have learned what 'tis to be one. Teach me here
My first new duty.

Dion. Check debauching riot
That sluices now the palace! Cease these feasts
That fume to heaven like Hecate's brewing-vats!
Nay, sir, those scowls unwrite your waterish vow.

Aris. Our Dion means, my lord, that virtue wanes
As revels wax; and yet an hour of rest
The gods allow us. I myself have trained
Young figures for the dance that wreathes with grace
The needful, idle hour.

Diony. You leave us music?

Aris. Ay, 'tis the angel 'tween the sense and soul,
A hand on each, that one may feel the touch
Of purest heaven mid rosy revelling,
The other catch sweet trembles of a wave
That shake her calm till white cheek meets the rose.

Diony. And feasting, sir?

Aris. Nay, there's the soul's expense
For what o'erdims her fair, majestic visions;
But fruits of sheltered vales grow lush for man,
And awny grasses droop with sugared grains,
And wine, tempered to reason's flow, oft lights
The questing mind.

Diony. Enough! No groaning board
That shifts its burden to the spirit! No revel
To pleasure! Pleasure! Naught but what is meet
For fair philosophy's relaxive hour!

Adrastus, see 'tis done. Go instantly!

[*Exit Adrastus*]

Dion, you're for the harbor?

Dion. With your leave.

Diony. Which we must grant. Your business is our own.

Oc. With you, my lord?

Dion. Most welcome son. Adieu.

[*Exeunt Dion and Ocrastes*]

Ara. Brother, 'tis long since you have visited me.

I hold a magnet now in our new friend

Will draw you to my house.

Diony. Nay, I must rob you.

The palace is his home.

Ara. O, not to-day!

Diony. I'll yield to-day, but not an hour beyond

To-morrow's sun. Adieu, Aristocles.

Give me thy love; I'll give thee Syracuse.

[*Exeunt Dionysius and lords*]

Ara. [*To Aristocles*] We have some statues in the garden, sir,

May please an eye from Athens. Will you come?

[*Exeunt Aratea and Aristocles*]

The. Mother, why look so darkly on Ocrastes?

Nau. Darkly, my daughter?

The. Has he not a soul

As truly virtuous as his face is fair?

Nau. True, but he's not for you. Believe it.

The. Ah!

Nau. Nor grieve my heart with pleading to know more.

Some day I'll speak, but now my bosom's locked

With key not in my hands.

The. Mother, I pray

You'll give no more a flattered, willing ear

To lord Phillistus' tongue.

Nau. What do you mean?

The. I do not know. I am disturbed by him.
I scarce can tell you how.

Nau. To call him friend
But proves my loyalty to the loved dead.

The. I do not doubt my mother! No, no, no!
But him I fear. His eye speaks muddily,
And echoes not his words.

Nau. No more of this!
You prattle, child. Say that he loves me——

The. Ah,
Not that!

Nau. Yet were he villain, is not love
The soul's sweet cleanser and redeeming incense?

The. The serpent and the bee make food and venom
Of the same flower's sweetness; so fair minds
In love enlarge with merit, while villainy,
Sucking such sweet, swells rank and poisonous.

Nau. No more, my daughter!

[*Enter courtiers, right*]

Nau. Good-day, my lords! You are early from the
play. Did it not please you?

First courtier. Tame, tame. I'd not have left my couch
at the bath for such. And Dracon's tongue was middle
of a pretty tale.

Nau. But the banquet—why stayed you not for that?

Second courtier. Have you not heard? The seven evil
winds have struck the feast, and left but fruit and wine.
My wife's as good a cook. Can serve a plate of figs!

Nau. What's this?

First courtier. As we say. Our delectable gardens are
smit with sudden prudent frost. The mullein and the
plantain shortly will grow where we have plucked luxu-
riance' rose.

[*Enter Aratea and Aristocles*]

Nau. What do you mean, my lord?

First courtier. [*Looking at Aristocles*] The wind is all too near that wrought this havoc.

Aris. Nay, have no fear for Dion. You wrong this hour of promise. Your brother yields us much.

Ara. Indeed too much! These sudden born desires are to be feared in him. Ah, here's Ocrastes.

Nau. He's much disturbed. I know that brow.

[*Re-enter Ocrastes, right*]

The. Ocrastes?

Oc. Now heavens shake for what mine eyes have seen!
I followed Dion to the southern shore
Where the new pinnace floats beneath the castle,
And there Domenes held him in close talk,
When suddenly ere wink could question it,
The soldiers had him bound within a boat
Outrowing to the pinnace, which took him up
And bent to sea like an embodied wind.
But that a score of traitor arms enforced me
The waves had kept me not on hated land!
Surprise so stormed him Dion scarce could call
"Revenge me not, but seek to calm the city!"
Then from the pinnace a relenting boat
Brought this short writing. 'Tis for Aratea.

Ara. Read—read—Ocrastes—I—I can not see.

Oc. [*Reads*] Aristocles will be thy comfort. Bid him not forget Syracuse to think of me. Now that the thorny counsellor is plucked from court, he can do much with Dionysius. Ocrastes will be to thee a brother of more love than ever was the tyrant. Sweet, farewell. 'Tis from thine eyes I'm banished, not thy heart.

Ara. O Dion, Dion! My unhappy lord!

Aris. Abate thy grief, dear lady. Affliction is

The night of man where stars his lustrous soul
That in a happy sun would pale unseen.

Ara. My brother! 'Tis his treacherous hand! O, me!
Now heaven and earth be naught, I care not!

[*Exeunt Aratea, Nauresta, Theano and attendants*]

A courtier.

Come!

There's more to this.

Another. Ay, friends, let's to the streets.

[*Courtiers hurry away. Ocrastes and Aristocles alone*]

Oc. I'll rouse the populace!

Aris. No, you will calm it.

Oc. Sir, I was knit in heat and tempered mortal!
Your natal star was cold when you were born,
Dead in the heavens, had long forgot its fire,
And could not give one twinkle's warmth to you!
I've blood, and know my friends!

Aris. Dost think that sorrow
Lives only in hot brows? No angers be
That rage not on the tongue?

Oc. O, you can feel?

Aris. Here sweep the tides that prove it.

Oc. Yet so calm?

Aris. Who keeps his heart astir with his own woe
Has never room for others. Let us put
Our paltry love aside and seek the good
Of all the city, not of one because
He is our friend. Think not a man may leave
Life's reefed and breakered straits behind and reach
Philosophy's still-waved almighty sea
With selfish sorrow's mottled pilot eye.

Oc. And you've a mortal pulse? Can love and die?

Aris. I am as you, Ocrastes,—heart and limb,—
But I have given my kingdom to my soul,
And throned secure above the body's chance
Rock not with its misfortune.

Oc. Who can keep
Such sovereign state, my lord? Art never torn
Or shaken?

Aris. What hap of winds, think you, may shake
The monarch towers of the soul?

Oc. Forgive me,
Aristocles. Thou sun immovable!
How like Hyperion fixed in calm you shine,
And riot's faction in my blood grows still
With looking on thee. I'll to court and strive
With sober measure to effect repeal
Of Dion's banishment. And failing that,
I yet may save for him his untouched wealth.

[*Going, turns*]

Is it not lonely on the serene height,
My lord?

Aris. The gods are sometimes there.

[*Exit Ocrastes*]

The gods?

Vain words on vainer tongue. O, man, man, man!
Weak child of limit and unwinged desire,
Coping with deity in daring bout,
And drowned at last within a woman's tear!
. . . Hyperion fixed in calm. Ay, true it is
That in the heaven of my sphering mind
I've reached the pause solstitial. And would fain
Take comet course on new, unbidden track
Than traverse o'er the stale appointed route.
Ay, break the orbit's fond and placid round,
And swim a wonder to the staring suns!
The end is death,—and yet a comet's death.
The rushing wings are round me, bear me up,
And drive me like a meteor charging doom,
When Aratea veils me with her eyes.

[*Enter Tichus*]

Tich. [*Aside, noting Aristocles' groan*] Ho, for ill that's past and ill that is to come, philosophy has ever a saw, but in a present pinch speaks not for groaning! . . . My lord, the lady Aratea asks for word with you.

Aris. [*Hesitating*] Tell her . . . I come.

[*Curtain*]

ACT II

SCENE 1. *An outer court, Dionysius' palace. Two entrances to palace on the right. Columns rear. Sea and sky seen between them. Behind columns a street. At left a garden. Speusippus and lords pass from street toward garden.*

Speu. Dion, my lords, has gathered friends in Athens,
And waits your invitation to set sail
With power for your relief. Six circled moons
Have risen from the sea since he was banished
And you are dumb as you were staring yet
Upon the marvel of his taking off.

First lord.

What is his life with you?

Speu.

He walks a mark

For Athens' eye,—a breathing virtue, sir,
Making the good in other men stand still
To gaze at what in him is better.

Second lord.

This

Is his true color.

Speu.

True? By Pallas, sir,

Apollo purges not more ardently
The earth of humors than he iniquity
From man and state! Divinity has made
His heart her brooding place to bring forth deeds
So like her own complexion that men read
The book of Heaven in them and grow wise
Without the aid of schools.

First lord.

We know our loss.

Third lord. The tyrant sends him his great revenues.

Speu. Which Dion casts like sweet and general rain
On parching poverty. His charity
Is a perpetual summer where bruised merit
Lifteth in flower.

Second lord. So was it here.

Speu. And you
Could have him home had you some brave Greek blood
At heart. Please you, I've heard a shepherdess
Combed wool on Dardan plain when Troy was burning.
Methinks Sicilian sires bred from that dame.

First lord. By Zeus, this is bold rating.

Second lord. 'Tis our due.
'Twixt caution's pause and the delay of shame
Lies but one step, and Syracuse is on it.
Courage grows agued and hunches at the hearth
Forefearing enterprise.

Speu. Can you be still?

Third lord. No more, my lord. Here's Dionysius.

[*They move into garden as Dionysius enters from street with
Aristocles and other lords, and turns toward palace*]

First lord. He's well attended.

Second lord. Ay, let tattered vice
Step out o' door and condemnation hoots
It home again, while silken viciousness
May march as 't will 'tween meek uncovered polls,
With Flattery's footmen running neck and neck
To open any gate.

First lord. True! true!

Speu. Talk! talk!
A sword's the tongue for me!

Third lord. The tyrant speaks.
Hark, friends!

Diony. Aristocles, excepting thee
No man alive might teach me hate myself.
Say what thou wilt, I'll love thee!

Third lord.

Fair enough.

Second lord. Fair in the flower, but no fruit, my lord.
The fragrance sickens. A sound wholesome deed
Were pungent sniffing!

Aris. Sir, upon the soil
Of this fair courtesy I'd lodge a seed
Might bloom with Dion's pardon.

Diony. Pardon Dion!
By Delos' horned altar, no! My tongue
Compound my own destruction?

Aris. Sir, your tongue
Is bound to you, but I could wish it had
A wiser master.

Diony. Roast me in the bull
Of Phalaris, if I be such a fool!
Thou know'st that he conspired against me!

Aris. Nay——

Diony. With honey breath you steal into my heart
But to betray it!

Aris. I pray your leave to sail
From Sicily. Greece hath a place for me
Above insult.

Diony. Go when you will. To-day!
Our admiral shall bear you.

[*To Heraclides*] Hear you, sir?
Choose out your ship. Aristocles, farewell.
Talk not of me i' the Academe.

Aris. My lord,
The gods take care we've no such dearth of matter.
Farewell.

Diony. [*As Aristocles turns to go*] Dost mean it?
Nay! Spoil not my jest.
Canst take offence from one who loveth thee?
In truth wouldst go?

Aris. The winds that fan me hence

Will be as welcome as the breeze that lifts
 The sail of calm-bound mariners that long
 Have in mid-ocean rocked and dreamed of food.

Diony. No, no, my friend! Thou shalt not go from me!
 Dost call thyself philosopher, and take
 First chance to fly thy duty here? Hear you,
 Lord admiral. Watch every gate nor let
 This bold man pass. Sink the Sicilian fleet
 Ere you do spare a ship for hire or pity
 To grant him sail and beggar me of friends,
 For all my friends are corporate now in him.
 [*To Aristocles*] Talk not of parting while you have my love.
 Cold yet? Go seek my sister. She will bring
 Your high look to sweet friendship's level. Go.
 Yours is the only tongue can draw her from
 Her tearful reticence. Tell her the stars
 Will find me with her. I have news too new
 For pale indifference. 'Twill rouse her wrath
 Or pleasure.

[*Speusippus and companions pass from garden to street
 and off left*]

Ha, what Greekish stranger there?

Phil. Speusippus, sir.

Diony. Methought his acid look
 Had turned my purple cloak a pauperish yellow.

Phil. Aristocles best knows him. An Athenian.

Aris. [*Who is slowly going into palace by smaller en-
 trance, front, turns*] And worthy of his birth. He is my
 friend,

And brings me Dion's love.

Diony. That name again!

. . . Well, thou'rt my soul.

[*Aristocles goes into palace. Dionysius turns to larger
 entrance rear*]

Phil. [*Detaining Heraclides*] A word with you, my lord.
[*Dionysius and attendants enter palace*]

Her. What's urgent, friend?

Phil. Marked you Speusippus?

Her. Ay.

Phil. He comes to stir a war in Dion's name.
Already there's a rumbling 'mong the people
That warns us to be swift.

Her. My fears have caught it.

Phil. The tyrant's mood is ripe. See how he loves
And hates Aristocles? This is the hour
To move him to the Athenian's death.

Her. You're right.
When friendship oars 'tween choler and regard,
A crafty hand may steer which wishéd way
Sets wind of secret business, and he
That rides be none the wiser.

Phil. The Athenian
Removed, then Dionysius is our own.

Her. We'll have short need of him. The tyrant's guards
Are envious of the Greek to murder's pitch,
Because he counsels Dionysius
To cast them off and rule by love alone.
The captain stands our friend, his sword aloft
To fall as turns the hair.

Phil. The guards must do 't.
The people hold them privileged in humors,
And say not yea or nay to them. But does
Callorus join us?

Her. He yet hesitates.

Phil. Then cease your suasion and to his easy state
Clap screws will cramp. Pain is the orator
Can clinch his case and drive the question home.

Her. You'll to Ægisthus?

Phil. Ay, though we've a difference.
A trifle that his vanity may stand on.

Her. Make your excuse, but study how you do it.
Faults oft are none till clapped conspicuous
With an apology.

Phil. I've learned of you.
None has a tongue more apt to come at love
'Neath what ill cover hides it. Dionysius
I leave to you. My name use as 'twere yours.
My sum of wisdom is to know your own
And trust you wholly.

Her. That you may, Phillistus.
My fame rests on this move. *[Exit]*

Phil. Your fame, good sir,
Has naught to do with what I close intend.
By Victory's wings, I'll reach the top of power,
Or from her golden ball knock Fortune's foot
And steer her course myself! Now to Nauresta.

[Goes into palace, front entrance. Brentio, Tichus and Methone enter merrily from garden. Brentio carries a large harp. They sit on benches left]

Bren. These are merry days since Dionysius brought us to the palace. I would weep for my poor banished master, for they say a far country makes a weary foot, but there's so much laughing matter here—the singing and the rhyming, and the pretty wenches tripping your eyes up at every corner, that my tears are no more out than I've good reason to whip them in again.

Meth. O Venus! There's no laughing here save of your dreaming. Dost see how the courtiers scowl? They say the scholars and philosophers leave them no dancing room in the palace; the halls are full of sand for the pleasure of the students that come to draw those foolish figures—plates, they call em——

Tich. Geometry.

Bren. That's your master's doing. Thank the wise man for that!

Meth. It suits our mistresses well enough. They blink at a smile as an owlet at the sun. Troth, I've seen them weep so much that I feel wrapped in a fog with the vapor of their tears.

Tich. But let us be merry. No more sad airs, my sweet Methone.

Bren. [*Aside*] I like not this sugary possessive. . . . Play, my own sweetest Methone, and I'll sing you a song out of head.

Meth. Pray you, sing it not out of feet too, for a limping line is past carrying.

Bren. 'Tis a song of you and will go fast enough, I warrant.

Meth. [*Scornfully*] Of me?

Bren. Nay, of your jewels!

Meth. An you mock me, I'll——

Bren. [*Touching his lips*] Your rubies [*pointing to his eyes*], your diamonds [*grinning to show teeth*], your pearls.

Tich. You may sing that song when diamonds wink tears, rubies pucker for kisses, and pearls bite figs i' the morning.

Bren. Well, I've a better one. [*Sings*]

Her voice is like the birds that wive
When blossoms swing in April trees,
And from her bosom's honey hive
Sighs come and go like bees.
Her smile——

Meth. Nay, I'm no farm-house sweet for loutish Corydon! How would you sing me, master Tichus, were I in Athens where every maid is fair?

Tich. With more truth and less boast.

Meth. Your song, sir.

[*Tichus sings*]

Heigh-ho, my star of love
 Has left its heaven high,
 And all the beauteous court above,
 To dwell in fair Methone's eye.
 And now, alas, unlucky bliss,
 It finds a home so bright
 That all its beauty buried is
 Within that fairer, cruel light.

No more, no more it shines for me
 But as she gives it leave!
 O, bid thy stars, sweet maid, agree——

Bren. Ho, if heaven had no stars save those left by
 lovers after fitting up their mistress' eyes, Erebus would
 stumble for want of candles!

Meth. [*Jumping up*] Go! I hear my mistress!
 [*Tichus walks leisurely into garden, Brentio following*]
Meth. Brentio, take the harp!

[*Brentio returns and picks up harp*]

Bren. So! I'm an excellent dromedary, if I can't flute
 it like Apollo.

Meth. Run, snail!

Bren. Not I, by Vulcan's limp!

[*Theano appears at smaller entrance of palace*]

The. Methone?

[*Brentio runs into garden*]

The. [*Coming out*] You here, Methone? Attend the
 lady Nauresta.

I fear your pleasure and your duty lie
 Too far apart. [*Exit Methone, right*]

Ocrastes, come! My love!

Fair closed flowers that wait the royal dawn
 Ere they will sport with beauty's open face
 Are as my heart that caseth up its joy
 To wait thy voice.

[*The day darkens to dusk. Theano looks into the garden, suddenly eager*]

He's coming! No, he stops
To talk with Brentio. How close they whisper!
What is 't he gives the slave? For shame, bold eyes,
To spy upon a lord so true! What was 't
Phillistus said? No matter. It was false.

[*She moves aside as Brentio crosses to palace*]

Bren. [*Jingling coins*] O sweet, sweet gold! Art mine—
all mine—my love?
And will I do it? Ay! I'd sell my soul
To such a brave paymaster.

[*Enters palace*]

Oc. [*Coming on right, not seeing Theano*]

Vile, too vile!

Let me not think of it.

The. Ocrastes?

Oc. Ah,

My never-setting star!

The. But you are troubled.

Hast news?

Oc. Rumors, my girl. They're in the air
Like floating poisons. O that Syracuse
Had one man in 't!

The. Look in my eyes and see him.

Oc. One sword in one right hand!

The. Here, in my eyes.

Oc. I see a dallying, damnéd temporizer,
Who stops to count the threatening dragon's teeth
Ere reaving him of head.

The. My love, what is it?

Oc. Still Dion lingers, playing the game of wits
In idle Athens, while scandal eats his name——

The. Ocrastes!

Oc. Yes, I said it.

The. Ah, you mean——

Oc. I mean——

The. Aristocles.

Oc. O, Dion, Dion!

The. Speusippus says he comes.

Oc. Too late he comes

That should be here already.

The. Dear my love,

He is not young as you, and years are cautious.

While age makes ready to resent affront

The blows of youth are given and forgot.

Oc. Ah, my Theano, I've but one place of peace——

Nay, I've not that—your pity-housing bosom.

Though Æolus' thirty sons made centre round me,

There should I rest as on a summer cloud

Rose-covered by the toil of flying doves

To keep off heaven's tears. And you deny it!

The. My own!

Oc. You do not love me!

The. Hear him not,

O patient Heaven!

Oc. Come to me, Theano.

The. Not while my mother lives to suffer for it.

Oc. My love, as nature runs, she must die first.

Forgive my rudest tongue—but will you then—

When so she goes—bring all this heart to me?

I'm tortured lest her bitter will against me

Should reach back from the tomb.

The. Ah, my beloved,

The wounds we give the dead must fall unfelt.

Then why should senseless graves wound life? Ay, then—

Unhappy happy then—I'll be all yours.

[*Enter Methone, right*]

Meth. Mistress Theano, your mother is strangely ill.

I pray you, come.

The. O me, my fatal word!

Oc. Nay, 'twas our watchful star moved me to urge it.
Let me go with you, love, and strive once more
To win the picket of her bluff regard.

The. Not now. Wait here until I come again.
[*Exit Theano*]

Oc. The silken bud that holds a treasured world
Uncaskets nothing in the hour of bloom,
But fans the air with its own waste of leaves.
Even so my hope, that with the swelling year
Pressed to a summer crown, unfolds on naught
And prodigal of self to naught is come.

[*Goes into garden. Stars appear in the sky visible beyond columns, rear. Servants come out of the palace and set lights about the court. Enter Aratea and Aristocles from palace, front. They cross to rear and sit between two of the columns*]

Ara. Aristocles—my Dion's friend and mine—
I rest upon your soul and feel encirqued
By silent potence, like the quietude
Of heaven when gods are still,—when prayers come not,
And enters no desire. So strange—this peace.
My infant eyes oped on a shaking isle,
And I was cradled in my father's wars.
O soon, too soon, I knew woe's touch of death!
But these are living days—days to be wreathed
With memory's stars, and circled new each morn
With pearls iridian from regretful eyes
That they—such days—can pass.

Aris. Eternity
Looked once upon the world, where lingers yet
Some brightness of her eye that we call Time.
Can aught so fleet hold value of thy tear?
Thou who hast the immortal heritage?

Ara. I can not say. Your mind in heaven sleeps,

And by the day you but recall your dreams;
While I, my lord, couch not so gloriously,
And from the earth must speak.

Aris.

O, not from earth——

[*Re-enter Ocrastes*]

Ara. [*To Ocrastes*] Will you not sit with us?

Oc.

Nay, I'll rest here.

[*Lies down on one of the long seats*]

I know you talk of Dion, and one who loves him
Brings no intrusive ear,—or if it is,
'Tis deaf with weariness.

Ara. [*To Aristocles*] He's tempest-racked
Between his love and friend. Ay, me, the world!

Aris. I'll leave you now. No more of my poor thoughts.
You're wearied with long listening. [*Rises*]

Ara.

O, sir,

Your thoughts are flowers and your words their fragrance;
I do not hear but breathe them. Pray you, stay!

[*He slowly resumes his seat. She looks silently at the sky. He writes on tablet*]

Ara. Aristocles, thou wilt be god of gods
When thou'rt among those stars; but now, O friend,
Come nearer earth. Be mortal for my sake.
I'm fearful when you're gone, or when your soul
Keeps court so far above me.

Aris.

I'll read to you.

Ara. What you have written there?

Aris.

No—no—'tis nothing.

Ara. Ah, do not read to-night. I am so lonely
That even with a book I would not share thee,
Though it should tempt with the most wondrous hap
Of bard or lover caught in liquid line.
You've travelled much; tell me an Egypt tale.
I'm weary of nymphs, and piping shepherd songs,
And the ever-wrangling gods of blue Olympus.

Aris. Then hear the tale of Isis as 'tis told
By the prophet-cradling Nile when Lotus buds
Upbreathing blow new seasons of old dreams.
Not e'en our Venus, dove-led, invisible,
More softly moves to Paphos wood than she
O'er sleeping earth. Her wings lead on the light,
And when she lifts them dawn awakes.

Ara. Fair Isis!

Aris. She seeks her brother, self-created, slain
By his own pride, for he was God of All.
Her tears, like weeping music, sweeten earth,
Nor rests she till she finds him.

Ara. Sister Isis!

Aris. And then—none knows how hid in solitude
She suckles death with life till he new rises
The God of All, too great for pride, too just
For death; the sire of Beauty, breathing Life
Through Love,—soul of the nurturing sun—
The mother-breast of fields—the parent thrill
Of birds, of trees, of flowers—of all that makes
Most sweet the fair world's mortal pageantry,—
Yea of the eternal, vital glow that throbs
Within humanity's deep-rubied heart.
So runs the myth, dear Aratea.

Ara. Ah!

How runs the rubric of thy thought that sets
The symbol plain? Read that to me, I pray thee.

Aris. The lonely mind may not uprafter stars,
And vain, adventurous man who of himself
Createth Heaven must see it fall. Then doth
The woman spirit, girdle of the worlds,
Above the ruins cry,—his mate forgot
Who from his flesh by love's divinity
Calls forth the beauteous eternities
To star the globe of life.

Oc. [Rising] Which is to say,
As simple people speak in Sicily,
A man must wed!

Ara. Ocrastes, talk not so!
Like stars that may not range below the zenith,
His meaning keeps the orbit of high thought,
And will not dwell in gross and simple words.

Oc. Ho, mistress Dion, you too would like to spin
Your cobwebs round the moon! [*To Aristocles*] Get you
to Athens,

While you may say to Dion she is true!

[*Aristocles tries to speak*]

O, ay, I know what you would say, my lord.
You would not love Aurora though she dropped
Her morning mantle at your feet and blushed
Herself revestured. No! But Aratea!
She has a human heart,—eyes that can fill
With tears,—soft hands that love the thing they touch,—
A body that might be the ivory cup
Delight doth use to dip and measure out
The rose-flood of her pleasure. Go, I say!
Take to the sea, and leave no track my sword
May follow. [*Rushes into garden*]

Ara. Sir, forgive his madness! Ah,
He is distracted by these wrongs to Dion.
I have not told you, friend, that Dionysius
To-day seized all possessions of my lord,
And stopped all moneys to him. In this deed
Ocrastes reads the preface to new woes,
Which shakes his mind's security and gives
A living color to his fantasies.

[*Aristocles stands gazing out, not showing his face*]
But Heaven and I know your white soul, my lord—
[*Enter Callorus, from palace, larger entrance, with guards*]
Callo. Your pardon, worthy sage and fairest lady.

I come from Dionysius, whose care
Has bared a plot against Aristocles,
Whom he for safety bids repair at once
To the castle fort, where he must rest to-night
In sure protection of the royal guards.

Ara. The guards? The royal guards?

Callo.

You will make haste,
My lord? Before the people move against you.
Hearing that Dion has set sail with troops
To level Syracuse, they think 'tis by
Your aid and counsel. Pray you, lose no time.

Aris. I'll go with you, Callorus. Not from fear,
But to keep riot down that else might shake
The city's peace. [*To Aratea*] Farewell.

[*Exeunt Aristocles, Callorus and guards, by street*]

Ara.

Farewell? I could not speak.

The tyrant's guards! They hate Aristocles.
My fears have now a shape and short will show
Their foulest face. I must take means at once
To learn the truth. My careful Dionysius,
I will be vigilant too.

[*Turns to go in. Picks up a bit of paper*]

'Tis what he wrote

And said 'twas nothing. O,—a pretty rhyme!

[*Reads*]

Thine eyes are on the stars, my Star!

Would I might be

That heaven far

With thousand eyes on thee!

He is a poet. Ay, 'tis but a rhyme.
And yet—'tis very pretty—I will keep it.

[*Re-enter Ocrastes from garden. He approaches Aratea
as if he would speak, but she hurries into palace, en-
trance front, without seeing him. He retires in gloom*]

*as Dionysius and a train of lords come out of palace,
large entrance, rear]*

Diony. Come, friends! Now is the sweetest garden
hour,

When day's dust-fouléd trail is passed, and night
Has not yet donned her moist and heavy cloak.

[They cross to garden]

Here let us wait the lords. We've summoned all
Of golden purse and of right noble line.
Now that we've stopped all revenues to Dion,
And this night give our sister to a husband
Of our own choosing——

Oc. Dionysius!

Diony. Ha! You, Ocrastes? Know to whom you
speak!

Oc. My lord, you would not dare——

Diony. Not dare? That word
Is strange to me. Will some good scholar here
Tell me its meaning?

Oc. Pardon, mighty lord.

I sought to warn you that the wife of Dion——

Diony. Your blood moves hotly off in Dion's cause,
And warning from our chief suspected foe——

Oc. This arm has fought your battles, sir!

Diony. Ay, so.

Would we might rank your famous valiancy
Once more with us, but while we doubt your heart
You are our enemy.

Oc. What proof, my lord——

Diony. We'll find it soon enough. Till then have care,
And dainty walk 'tween wolf and precipice!

[Dionysius and lords go into garden]

Oc. To cry this wrong would give the sea new tongue,
And mend the winds with utterance! But now
No time for sighs and groans. The tyrant's brow

Is hung with murder's cloud. I must be quick
 Or lose the breath ties me to upper earth.
 Action must take the vantage now of thought,
 And reason follow after.

[*Re-enter Theano, from palace*]

The. I was long.

. . . She's better now, and quiet.

Oc. Better? Who?

The. Who?—O! My mother.

Oc. Fie, does she yet live?

The. O gentle gods!

Oc. All women now should die.

The. Ocrastes!

Oc. Do not stare. Thine eyes are not
 The only home of agony. Farewell!

The. Farewell? No, no! [*Clinging to him*]

You'll tell me first! What is it?

Will you not trust me?

Oc. 'Tis thy trust I want.

The. Thou hast it.

Oc. Swear 'tis mine.

The. My lover!

Oc. Swear!

Thy trust! Thy perfect trust!

The. 'Tis thine. I swear it.

Oc. Though fiends of doubt hail thee on every side,
 Venting their slander from the mouth of winds,
 Yet wilt thou trust me?

The. Ay, my lord, I will!

[*Lords begin to enter from the garden*]

Oc. Once more to-night I'll see thee. Go!

The. My love!

Oc. Go, go!

[*Theano goes into palace. Dionysius comes from garden.*

Ocrastes moves aside and stands in shadow]

Diony. 'Tis time our sister should be told
Our happy purpose.

A lord. She is here.

[*Aratea re-enters, and hastens across to Dionysius*]

Ara. My brother,
I came to seek you. Lord Aristocles——

Diony. Ay, troubles press upon us, dearest sister,
And much is trembling in adventure's hand.
Now do we need your husband's strength to meet
Ill fortune's tide.

Ara. Then you have sent for Dion?
O, you forgive!

Diony. Speak not that traitor's name!
He is the foe 'gainst whom I must go forth.
You are to wed a lord whose might shall be
My own. To-night! Dost hear?

Ara. Ay, Dionysius.

Diony. And art not pleased? No thanks that I provide
For your forsaken state? Now, now! One word.
Stand not so fixed, as I had ordered you
To instant death.

Ara. You make me marble, sir.
Unloose my soul's locked torture with the key
Of one retracting word, or I must seek
In kinder stone my sole relief from pain.
O, say it is not so! This is a jest
Will make you weep when you——

Diony. Jestings to fools!
Not thronéd skies can change what we've determined.
This rebel brow shocks my fond heart that toils
In your ungracious service. Come, my friends.
All to the council hall! With me, my sister.

Ara. O, brother, not one moment to look back
And say farewell to Heaven? Not one to gaze
Into the darkness ere I plunge to hell?

Diony. And let the hour 'tween my intent and deed
Lay meddling finger on my purpose? Nay,
You know me better, madam. On my lords!
Delay's the whetstone sharpens best the blades
Of enemies.

Ara. Go, sir! I am myself.
I will not move. If you will tear me hence,
And drag your father's daughter at your feet,
Then you may take me to the council hall.

Diony. Your pleasure, sister. Here we'll hold our court.
Go, Clitus, to the steps and turn all hither.

Ara. Art thou my brother, Dionysius? Nay!
We are of different mothers. Now I know
We are of different fathers, too.

Diony. You dare!
Silence thy slanderous tongue!

Ara. I say thou'rt not
My royal father's son!

Diony. His sword is mine!

*[Seizes her in a rage, threatening her with his weapon;
then slowly releases her and she sinks to bench by pillar
of the colonnade. Lords assemble, some talking ex-
citedly but in undertone, others cool and scoffing. Speu-
sippus and friends enter, taking inconspicuous place.
Ocrastes keeps in shade, motionless and unnoticed]*

A lord. Ha, Calisthenes, you need not come to bite at
this bait. 'Tis a dainty morsel and only goldfish are al-
lowed to nibble.

An old lord. I mislike this marriage. 'Twill bring us
woe, let it reach Dion's ears.

Another. Ay, wars beyond our guess will come of it.

Young lord. The admiral against Ægisthus!

Second young lord. Héraclides? He is much wived
already.

Third young lord. The easier to take another.

Second young lord. Ægisthus bids most fair. I take you.

Diony. My friends, would that I had for each of you
So fair a sister, and were not thus forced
To choose among you. Who is first to speak?

Her. I pray this gift, my lord.

Diony. Brave admiral,
You would stand high, perhaps the highest with us,
Were't not that old wives make new enemies.

Iceles. I'm free to give my undivided heart.

Diony. But, good Iceles, age is creeping on you.
We want a fighting arm as well as heart.
Who else? No voice? Must we then hawk her up?
Look on her, gentlemen! Even tears may not
Disfigure her. This fit of sorrow past
You'll see her smile again, those wondrous smiles
You've longed in secret to make all your own.
A week, a day, will put some spirit in her.

Ara. [*Rising*] To you, my lords of Syracuse! Think not
To wed the wife of Dion as she stands.
You'll pluck no rose in me. This face I'll sere
With constant travelling tears, till Beauty here
Shall search in vain for memory of herself.
My wealth I'll fling upon the air to birds
And beggars. Ay, my palace shall take wings!
My costly robes I'll cast into the street
That common women may adorn themselves.
I am no princess. I refuse the name
Of aught that makes me sister to that wretch.
Go seek some linen washer by a brook
And find a wealthier and a prouder wife.

Diony. Spoke I not truth, my lords? You see how fast
Her spirit grows. Hear her sweet names for me?
Now we'll have bidders plenty. Thanks, my sister.
She'll sing, my lords, when once she's neatly caged.

Ægisthus. I beg——

Callorus. My lord——

Diony. 'Tis fit you both should speak

At once, for both alike sit in my favor.

Ægisthus' lands are broad, but you, Callorus,

Have proved a mightier leader in the field,

And all in all you do deserve alike.

There's none may rank above you.

Oc. [*Stepping out*] One, my lord.

Æg. There's none!

Callo. Let him come forth!

Diony. Who, sir? His name.

Oc. Ocrastes.

Diony. You?

Æg. Ha, ha!

Oc. Why not, my lord?

Diony. You're Dion's heart. You cast him off?

Oc. You ask

For proof? I take his wife. Were I to warm

My fingers in his blood, I'd have more hope

That he would rise and bless me than to keep

His love while she lies on my bosom.

Ara. O!

Oc. I challenge any here to match my claim.

This is the sword, my lord, that held the city

Against the Tarentines when these brave nobles

Trembled behind their fast shut doors.

Æg. 'Tis false!

Oc. All know 'tis true. Since boasting now's a virtue,

I'll do it well. Who wore the laurel wreath

That saved all Sicily a spreading blush

The day the Carthaginian youths were sent

Defeated home? You ask for wealth? My vineyards

Run to the wilderness. My corn now greens

On Ætna's slope and yellows by the Gela.

My father's coffers are unopened yet,

And ships are sailing here will fill my own.
 My slaves might meet an army, and I'll put
 A sword in every hand for Syracuse.
 In rank I bow to none. The blood of Pollis,
 First king of Syracuse, runs yet in me,
 And even Dionysius' royal self
 Yields to my line the birthright courtesy.

Diony. Enough. Now Dion's cause falls down.
 Enough!

Come to our heart, Ocrastes! There's not one
 We'd rather win to us.

Speu. [*Aside*] O, Dion, now all
 Forsake thee but calamity, that like
 A covetous ill wife hangs on thy fortune!

Diony. By Pluto, no more fear! Our throne is safe!

Oc. My lord——

Diony. Nay, brother!

Oc. Pray be warned by one
 Who knows too well your need. Not all the troops
 Of broadest Sicily may keep you safe
 When Dion comes from Greece. Men swarm to him
 As he were golden Saturn giving off
 New fortunes with each breath. Send me with speed
 To Italy. There I have friends shall be
 Your own, and pour a fleet into your harbor
 Will turn lord Dion pale when next his eye
 Scans Syracusan waters.

Diony. Italy?

We'll think of it. You're the true warrior stuff,
 Planning campaigns with the same breath you win
 A royal bride. We like you better for it,
 But she may like you less. Give her a word.

Oc. O, fairest woman that ever made the earth
 More sweet and beautiful to live upon,
 You'll find in me a true and gentle lord.

These tears I'll teach to run a smiling race
And in a happy death forget their birth.

[*Attempts to embrace her*]

Ara. Open the prisons, call some convict forth,
And I will wed him, but not you! These lords
Have hated Dion, have not lived upon
His constant kindness. You have drunk his love
Like flowing wine, and lived by it!

Oc. Rail on,
If railing pleases you. In aftertime
You'll love the better for it.

Diony. Right! Give her leave,
And she will stroke you where she meant to strike.

Ara. You love Theano!

Oc. Ah,—I did, perhaps,
A thousand years ago. All now's forgot
But that thou mayst be mine.

Ara. O, false——

Oc. O true!

What was scarce fair to unpossessing eyes,
Perfection is when gods have made it ours.
Thou wilt forgive me that I loved thee not
While thou wert Dion's, for my eyes were sealed
By loyalty to him. But this divorce
That frees thee gives me sight. I see, and love.
And by that love still dost thou grow more fair.
For is not love a second, truer eye,
Finding out beauty where the first could not?
No more! We'll plead hereafter. 'Tis an hour
To win, not woo. Swords must be burnished, sails
Must meet the wind!

Ara. Are you Ocrastes? No!
O, no! He is the son of Dion's love,
And you would wed his wife. He was a poor
Forsaken babe, his mighty heritage

Plunder for any thief. 'Twas Dion then
Became his father, gave him life and wealth,
And that sweet breeding that till now did show
So fair in him. Ocrastes owes him all——

Oc. Ay, all! E'en wisdom. He would call me fool
Stayed I from market when thy richest self
Courts any passing bid. Since he must lose——

Ara. Nay, every touch will be a three-fold shame
Robbing a husband, benefactor, friend.
My eyes will mirror those reproachful days
When Dion's care was fond about us both.
His kisses guard my lips. His praise of you
Will block your words in my assaulted ears.

Oc. You know me not. My words shall be love's fire
Burning the track of Dion's pale discourse.
My kisses on your lips hold festal war
With his till they, poor ghosts, shall flee. And dews
Of happiness shall wash all pictures out
From your fair eyes but my enthronéd own
Which hourly I'll new-set in their fair glass!

Ara. I called you brother! . . . O, my lords, I beg—
Some one of you—to take me for—your—wife.

[*Faints.* Ocrastes supports her. *Curtain*]

ACT III

SCENE 1. *A chamber in the palace. Nauresta on bed asleep. Phillistus watching.*

Phil. This poison's swift. Here is her cup. Whypalter?
A drop will do it. [*Gazes at her*]

'Tis when we sleep the touch
Of life is gentlest. Even affliction's kiss
Falls like a rose upon the sense-shut lid.
Then he most miserable is as the happy,
And who so happy that is not then more blest?
And since that death is sleep's eternal sum,
Why should I pause, nor grant this precious good?
O, I could moralize me to a god
Who holds the cup of bliss for lip beloved.
Nauresta, drink, and in this little drop
Sip everlasting ease. [*Pours poison*]

'Tis done. I've reached
From mortal shores and opened Hades' gate.
Ay, with the gesture of a hand have hooked
Eternity.

Nau. [*Waking*] Phillistus, you?

Phil. 'Tis I,

Beloved Nauresta.

Nau. Flowers! You have brought them?

Phil. Can I forget you love them?

Nau. Ah, my friends!

They wear no frown to dash down hearts; nor chide
When ears are sick for quickening praise; but yield
Their royal payment for each passing care;
No vagrant dew gives them its moistening heart
But they must pay it thrice in perfumed beauty,
And bury it as never king shall lie.

O human faces, might ye turn to flowers,
How many broken hearts would live again!

Phil. This is a covert chiding of my faults,
So deep repented, love. I'll make thee happy.

Nau. My gentle daughter—she that I could call
A sister to this rose—her mute complaints
Cry like dumb, wounded birds to my sore heart,
And I pass by nor help. For what, Phillistus?
That you may wear a crown in Syracuse.
A crown that is the golden nest of cares,
Brooded by every dismal wing may hatch
An enemy to peace.

Phil. And when didst grow
So wise, Nauresta?

Nau. Midnight hours teach well.
Some sleepless nights would help you too, I think.
Wise? Ay, and not too late! I'll be no more
Your shield while you make thrust at brave Ocrastes.
I'll give him my Theano.

Phil. Does he know?

Nau. Not yet. I weakly thought to pay old love
The grace of first confession.

Phil. [*Kissing her hand*] Thanks for that.
This sudden turning of a heart long loyal
Has left me numb. You know how dear my purpose
That she should wed a lord of my own faction.
Give me an hour, but one, before you speak.
You break the bough that held my care-built nest,
And old wings go not blithely after straw.

Nau. They've learned to wait, and who would 'count
an hour
Before the long day of unbroken love?
. . . I'm weary now, Phillistus.

Phil. Rest thee, sweet.
[*She sleeps*]

Ah, not too soon I spiced her cup. The way
Grows perilous, and I must mount with care
To my high seat, lest I should rise to fall;
For though the path to crowns be long and slant,
There's no way down but by a precipice.

[*Enter Theano bearing an urn which she places on table
by cup*]

The. You're faithful, sir. [*Bends over Nauresta*]
Her brow is calm again.

Phil. Now were I ill 'twould quickly make me well
To have so fair a face above my bed.

The. Hear, my lord, you'd die ere mine should be there!

Phil. Surely 'tis no offence to call you fair.

The. Beauty lives not upon your commendation,
Nor with your silence dies. Spare me, my lord,
The cymbal clap of words that add no jot
To fairness.

Phil. Pardon me, dear girl. I was
Your father's friend——

The. I strive not to forget it.

Phil. And could I have your love——

The. All that is good
In you I love. Now thou'st the measure, sir,
For my affection. Is it small enough?

Phil. By heaven, you do not mince it!

Nau. [*Waking*] Is that my daughter?

The. See, mother, I have brought this drink for you.

[*Pours beverage into cup and offers to Nauresta*]
There's health in 't. Is there not, Phillistus?

Phil. Ay,
Health and long life. [*Nauresta drinks*]

Nau. There's virtue in the cup.
Even now I'm better.

The. Now?

Nau. O, I could rise!

[*Sits up*]

The. No, dear. Be patient yet.

Nau. Nay, I'll be up!

Pray call Methone, love, to dress me. . . . Ah,
Whence comes this lighter heart? How good to have it!
I feel like a new-pardoned prisoner
Tasting the air. Smile, sweet! Those lily lids
Shall droop no more with woe I lay upon them.

[*Enter Methone with robes*]

Now, now, Methone, make me young again.
O, not that robe! 'Tis for a grandame that.
My sky-gray mantle with its falling softness
Broidered like sunset clouds!

[*Exit Methone*]

The. I beg you, sweet—

Nau. Wilt smooth my hair? Nay, let it be as 'tis.
This way. Ah—now— [*Falls back*] O! Help me! Help:
Let go, ye furies!

The. Mother!

Meth. [*Entering*] Mistress! mistress!

Nau. 'Tis poison! poison! I am murdered. O!
My daughter—tell her—tell her—ah—Ocrastes—

[*Dies*]

The. Have mercy, Heaven! O, Phillistus, help her!

[*Faints. Phillistus holds her*]

Phil. [*To Methone*] Go call your comrades here,

[*Exit Methone*]

Even now you're mine.

Ocrastes! Ha! Her last word was his name.

I'll turn this crook of fortune to account,
And make a god of accident.

The. [Reviving] O! O!

Misfortune makes my heart her sanctuary.
So many woes take shelter there.

Phil. One woe

You have escaped. Ocrastes' wicked love.
O villainous! I dare not think of it!

That he would poison one so dear to you——

The. Man, man, care for your soul! There is no stain
So black as when the gall of calumny
Breaks on the snow of virtue! You must rate
Your precious life at naught. Ocrastes, sir,
Will have your slanderous heart for this!

Phil. He may,

If 'tis your wish. You heard her cry his name
As though she saw her murderer.

The. She cried——

Ah, yes—I heard— What did she mean?

Phil. The truth.

The. Make me not mad!—He's never entered here.

Phil. Why should he when a little gold will buy
A hand for any deed?

The. The gold—the gold

He gave to Brentio! Dear Juno, help!
My mind strays from me.

Phil. Hast not found him changed?

Full of quick passions—contradictions—words
Of broken point? Seen shadows on his face
As though his mind were brooding darker matter
Than could be kept within 't? Bethink thee well,
For memory's eye reflective oft repeats
The confirmation of the grosser sight,
And what so pleased the entertained sense
Shows in her studied glass a fearful front.

The. O, stop thy tongue of death! My promise to him—
So strangely asked—so strangely given! O!—

Phil. Thy mother's word—

The. O, let me die, die, die!

Phil. My girl, all things that be may be endured.
Death does not come for this or that affliction,
But when 'tis time to knock. Up, sweet Theano!
By fortune's rudder, wheel and horn of bounty,
You shall rise fair above this foul mischance!

[*Re-enter Methone*]

Meth. My lady, lord Ocrastes begs to see you.

The. No, no! Not now.

Phil. Ay, see him now, Theano.
Show him the burden of this bed, nor let
The damnéd simulation of his eye
Deceive you. Bravely tell him to his face
None better knows the gate she came by death.

The. You lie! . . . And yet I can not see him now.
Though he is innocent, my wicked promise
Burns like accusing fire by this dear form.

Meth. Mistress, he comes!

Phil. I'll leave you with him. Courage!

[*Phyllistus retreats to curtains, left. Enter Ocrastes*]

The. You dare come here?

Oc. I dare?

The. O, see, Ocrastes,
What lieth here! The shell of what even now
Was she who gave me birth.

Oc. Not dead? Ah, love!

The. Call me not love! Not here—and now. O, go!

Oc. Theano!

The. Touch me not! My doubt will make
Your hand a thing of fire!

Oc. Dear heart, fend off
This sea of woe or 'twill sweep reason with it.

I could be wild with strange things that I know,
And came to tell you of, but for your sake
I'm calm.

The. Dost know, sir, she was poisoned?

Oc. Poisoned?

Forgive me, love. Be mad now as thou wilt,
Still thy distraction will be stinted measure
For grief so dark. Poisoned! O, who——

The. Who? Who?

That is the question thrusts me like a sword.
All loved her—all. She had no enemy.

Oc. [*Calmly*] You spoke of doubt. What did you mean,
Theano?

The. Leave me, Ocrastes! Go!

Oc. Phillistus——

The. No!

He loved her well. That was his touch of Heaven.
O, who had cause but——

Oc. Do not say it. I go.

Not deity descending from the skies
To make our peace could now unite us. Ay,
Thou'rt dead to me as that cold body.

The. Oh-h! [*Swoons*]

Oc. And in that bosom did I come to set
A purpose I'd not whisper now to death
Lest his dumb lips should tattle. Alone—alone,
To grapple in the dark the beast of chance!
. . . Affection on my track shall ache to death,
Friendship in blood lie mute, and love I'll tear
From its high heaven to plunge like Ate's coals
On Pluto's fire! [*Exit*]

Phil. [*Comes forward and revives Theano*]
Sweet girl, he's gone.

The. [*Rising*] Where is he?

Phil. He'll trouble thee no more.

The. Heat me the irons!
This tongue shall be burnt out that dared accuse him!

Phil. She's mad indeed!

The. Nay, sir, the cloud of pitch
That blinded me is gone. [*Enter maids*] Touch her not
yet. [*Maids stand aside*]
Methone, hasten Brentio to find
The noblest lord in Syracuse.

Meth. Who, mistress?

The. Who but Ocrastes? Go!

Phil. [*Approaching her*] Theano——

The. Sir,

We have no need of you. I pray you, go. [*Kneels by bed*]
He will forgive, then I will die with thee!

Phil. Nay, by the gods, should you so die, my maid,
'Then Sicil' will have groaning cause 'gainst one
Who robs her country to make rich her grave.
Immortal Beauty must herself go wronged
Should you so break her living mould in you,
And drain her veins to your fair body trusted
For warm and deathless passage.

The. [*Springing up*] Are you man
Or monster that you foul this hour with thought
So gross?

Phil. A man—no more, no less—who loves
Your mother's daughter. Hate me as you will,
I here adopt your grief,—with oath and tear
'Take it to love as my own child of woe,
And swear you faith to death.

The. The gods, my lord,
Record not oaths of men till they've received
The confirmation of an act. I'll wait
Their seal on yours.

Phil. This night——

The. Sir, will you go?
Stay not to rouse Ocrastes' rage.

Phil. You think
He'll come?

The. I've sent for him.

Phil. You're proudly sure.
Will coo your loves by this forbidding bed?

The. Ay, for her hovering shade knows now the truth.
[Enter *Heraclides*]

Her. Pardon, my lord, that I have sought you out.
The hour like an unbridled courser needs
Strong hands upon it. Ah,—death here?

Phil. There lies
Delay's excuse,—and yet 'tis none, for woe
Whose feast is but a heart should lift no head
Beside the large calamity that makes
A morsel of a state. How goes our matter?

Her. Aristocles is locked within the castle,
In care of Dionysius' guards.

Phil. Ah, then
He's safe.

Her. As safe as we could wish, my lord.
And I've yet fresher news. Ocrastes joins us,
With wealth and courage like an Atlas back.
To bear our venture.

Phil. He revolts from Dion?
Ocrastes?

Her. He, my lord.

Phil. What works this change?

Her. A lady's morning cheek and golden hair.
He now is wed to absent Dion's wife.

Phil. What say you, sir?

Her. The lords were in debate
Of who should have her, when out comes Ocrastes,

And cries his claim with such o'er-riding proof

That Dionysius claps a quick assent

And all the court confirm him sullenly.

Ocrastes goes to Italy for troops

To meet the force which Dion brings from Greece——

Phil. But this new marriage! Tell us more. Belike
I've missed some sport.

Her. Sport? Ha! It was a scene.

Phil. But went the lady to him willingly?

Her. O, she was modest, played chameleon

And changéd color rhythmically, as though

A music of sweet shades sat on her cheek,

Then coyly swooned, but her reviving eye,

Methinks, looked kindly on his youthful beauty.

Phil. [*Watching Theano*] And the young lord? Did not
his countenance

Play hers a blushing match?

Her. Ay, shame and will
Mapped out his face between 'em, but short met
In love's red constancy.

The. O! O!

Her. Once more
The lady fainted, but 'twas in his arms.
Ha, ha!

The. And yet I live!

Phil. How long, my lord,
Since this bold comedy?

Her. 'Tis now two hours
Behind us.

Phil. [*To Theano*] Ah, before he came to you!
What shameless shame!

The. He loved me! How—O, why?

Phil. Nay, ask not why. As well essay to trace
The legend that the soft and curling foam

Writes on the shaken wave as fix love's path
 With steady eye or his vagaries mark.
 Farewell an hour. I'll come again to-night
 To serve your grief. You'll learn at last to trust me,
 And in my heart seek comfort.

[*Exeunt Phillistus and Heraclides*]

The. Oh, oh, oh!

He does not love her. Would he did! I then
 Might honor him that dared dishonor truth
 For love's almighty sake,—but 'twas to save
 His life. Ah, me, his life that saved thus
 Abates all value and becomes as clay.

Meth. Sweet mistress!

The. O, O me!

Meth. Stay this hot flood.

Tears bring no lover back. Ay, not though maids
 Should weep until their cheeks were but a mead
 For two salt brooks to play.

The. O, leave me!

Meth. Nay——

The. Leave me, I say! Away! [*Exit Methone*]

O death! O life!—

Which wears the darker face? Here is my choice.

[*Falls by Nauresta's body*]

[*Curtain*]

SCENE 2. *A bare room in the castle fort. Aristocles alone.*

Aris. They said a bed would be provided me,
 But nothing's here. And nothing's all he needs,
 Who holds himself a soul stripped of the world
 And its necessities. [*Lies down*]

That fellow took

My cloak. Good luck to him. Philosophy,

Thou art the only sail no wind may drive
 Into misfortune's port. How still the world!
 The silence like a great Accuser stares,
 Full of dumb curses looking from large eyes.

[Rises and walks]

. . . I will not see her more. O, quickly come,
 Ye stoic angels wont to wait on me,
 And with the cords of resolution stout
 Bind ye my purpose to the throne of Zeus
 That it may shake but with Olympus' self!
 . . . Will she not think me harsh to leave her so?
 She who is made of all earth's gentle things—
 The scent of morn, the first green on the bough,
 The valley dew where infant blossoms drink,
 The going light with rose heart yearning back,—
 Yet brave, and like a new Hippolita
 Might wear the belt of Mars. O, flower of heaven,
 Yet wrapped in soft and strange delirium
 Of odors once Elysian! Naught to me,
 Who will not see her more. Now is she dead,
 And I know but a grave. I'll sleep . . . sleep . . . sleep.

[Lies still. Enter Aratea. She is veiled, and her unbound hair falls about her form]

Ara. *[Drawing inner bolt to door]* I scarce could bribe
 the guard to let me pass!

[Looks about room and sees Aristocles]

Asleep? *[Crosses to him. Unveils]* Rise, friend!

Aris. *[Starting]* My dream.

Ara. Aristocles!

Aris. *[Rising]* You? you?

Ara. I, friend.

Aris. 'Tis you—and yet 'tis not.

A stranger soul, disordered and unknown,
 Looks from your eyes.

Ara. My brother's false to thee.
'This castle's murder's trap, and you are caught in 't!
Aris. I've had some thought 'twas so. I die to-night?

Ara. No, no! dear Heaven! See!
[*Opens door, left*] This inner room.

It has a hidden stairway to the sea
Where waits a boat will bear you to a sail
New-spread for Greece, with crew that know the wave
As though begot of mermaids.

Aris. No! To make
Presumptuous end of life is an offence
To Heaven, but gracious gods may offer death
For honorable choice—as they do now—
And here I choose it.

Ara. Thy choice then must be mine.
My hope was you would fly and hasten Dion
To my deliverance. For I am sold.
The cords of bondage cut in very flesh.
But ask not now of this. This letter here
Will tell my lord what I have spared you. Go,
Or I've no hope, and then—by this bright blade—
[*showing a dagger*]

I die.

Aris. Ah, what you will! Command me.

Ara. [*Moving left*] Come!
Into this chamber!

[*Exeunt, and in a moment re-enter*]

O, the door new-sealed!
Apollo help us now! . . . Did you not see
The narrow window in that chamber?

Aris. Ay,
The stars looked on us as we passed, as though
They smiled to see how man would measure time
With periods clept death.

Aris. Thou'st whirled away my soul!
O stroke of Dis! O faithless Heaven! He?
Not he! Such mid-hell treachery is out
Of mortal meaning!

Ara. He is mad, I think.
He loves me not.

Aris. I'd sport a madman too!
Wear lunacy as doth a king his purple,
If that would draw a goddess from the skies
To quiet in my arms! Did it not strain
Forbearance to the snap that Dion—whose wisdom
Humbles the mouth of Zeus—whose justice is
The boast of shades when Rhadamanthus blunders—
Should wear the chiefest pearl to mortals cast—
Sweet Beauty's sole extravagance—as 'twere
A something to be stained with human love
And gods not question it? Who then could see
It made the common booty of a thief,
Nor break the cable of a mind controlled
And lose the shore of reason? Who?

Ara. [*Kneeling*] Be calm
If thou wouldst help me.

Aris. [*Not heeding*] Pity, weep, weep, weep!
O, from thy woeful heaven cast a dew
As universal as the East when she
To every herb throws pearls!

Ara. [*Leaping up*] The guards! They come!
But I go with thee, sir. 'Tis not farewell.

Aris. [*Calm*] Not you. I die because Elysian mates
Now summon me. No need excuses there
The guest intrusive. Stay thee for thy call,
Nor but to save an hour of painful breath
Cut ever off the never ending day
We two shall walk the clouds too happy e'en
To love. Give me that hope, and dying now

I live. Deny it, and 'tis you, not swords,
That wound. They slay poor flesh, that gauzy breath
Sole guards from wormy ravage. You would strike
My never-healing soul! Those steps of doom——

Ara. Hark! Ah—they pass! Dear gods, is there no way?

Aris. The window.

Ara. No!

Aris. I'll make the leap and live
To set you free!

Ara. No, no! The rocks would gash
More cruelly than swords. Wait—O! Blest Heaven!
Thou'rt saved! Wait here!

[*Runs into inner room*]

Aris. Go, spirit beautiful!
Her hair enrobes her like a parted cloud
That opes to show us Heaven. . . . Give now my flesh
To swords, ye gods, but save me from the death
That has no end! . . .

[*Re-enter Aratea, shorn of her locks, which she lays at
Aristocles' feet. Her veil is draped about her, conceal-
ing her loss*]

O! Maimed, my goddess?

Ara. See?
I knew you'd say me nay. But now 'tis done.

Aris. Those locks of Venus' gold.

Ara. The dagger served.

Aris. Too well!

Ara. [*Weaving the locks*] Not so. Now, now a rope to
bridge

Eternity for thee! More strands! Lend me
Your lightnings, blessed skies, to weave this chain!

Aris. Your flying fingers need them not.

Ara. More, more!
A thousand hairs, they say, will hold a man.

Aris. Ay, one will do it.

Ara. Merry, my lord? Why not?
Apollo, smile upon us! I know we dream.
See how I make this fast? It is your life
I lengthen.

Aris. O, 'tis bought too precious!y!
[*Takes up a lock and kisses it*]
What waste of sun and gold!

Ara. Nay, when you're safe,
I'll cast it to fair Venus on the sea,
A votive offering. Look now! 'Tis done.

Aris. So soon?

Ara. And you must go.

Aris. Art sure 'tis done?

Ara. Afraid, my lord?

Aris. Afraid!

Ara. You see 'tis finished.

Aris. Ay, 'tis.

Ara. The window—come! We'll make this fast—
And then—farewell!

Aris. Till I return with Dion.

Ara. Return? No, no, my lord! O, come no more
To this cursed land. Be happy in thy Athens.
And Plenty bless thee as thou wert her child,
Swelling thy measure till prosperity
Hang on thy look like fruit invisible
Dropping to whom thou wilt.

Aris. And you—and you—
My heart is dumb. What gods wish for themselves
Become a human fortune and befall thee!

[*Exeunt. Guards approach and beat door. Re-enter
Aratea*]

Ara. Strike, dogs! Some say Apollo fathered him.
O, god of melody, guard thou the life
That beats a perfect song!

[*Door falls and Domenes enters with guards*]

Dom. What! Who is this?

Ara. A princess, sir.

Dom. Where is the prisoner?

Ara. He's gone.

Dom. Gone! How? Where?

Ara. Did not Zeus himself
Steal Ganymede? Why not Aristocles?

[*Curtain*]

ACT IV

SCENE: *The grove of Ceres on the right, a temple partly visible. The island of Ortygia in rear, separated from mainland by a very narrow channel with wall on the Ortygian side running off stage left, to channel bridge where the ensuing conflict is supposed to centre. The island extends down to the Lesser Harbor, centre rear, which widens to a sea-glimpse at right. On the island shore in the farthest distance is outlined the temple of Artemis. Part of the Ortygian castle is shown on an island, left, the lower part concealed by channel wall.*

At extreme left, front, the entrance to Phillistus' dwelling is seen. Between dwelling and channel a road leads toward the bridge. At front of stage a road runs left toward the Greater Harbor, and right toward Epipolai, the outermost portion of the city.

On the right, toward rear, terraces lead up to the heights of Achridina. Various statues are seen, the largest being a Victory at entrance to grove. Off the stage, left front, over Greater Harbor, the sun is setting, throwing gradually softening tints and increasing shadows.

Troops of soldiers, laughing and talking with citizens in holiday costume, come up the road from the Greater Harbor and pass off toward Epipolai. Speusippus, Ascander, and Timoleon, enter from grove and stand near the Victory. At right front enter young men arrayed for banqueting, bearing wreaths, torches, etc. They turn to rear and pass up terraces toward Achridina, singing.

O, pleasure is the wing of Time,
 Care his limping, leaden foot!
 Too late, too late, for laugh and rhyme
 When old Winter's at the root
 Of desire,
 And no fire
 Can thaw the frost where we lie mute.

Then come all and feast ye now!
 Come catch Love, the pretty rover!
 Not a maiden bind her brow
 With a rose unkissed by lover!
 As a flower
 Is Cupid's hour,
 And where he flies none can discover.

[Exeunt toward the heights of Achridina]

Timoleon. So turns our war into a holiday.
 Here Dion lands, and swift the tyrant flies
 With all his boasted guard into the castle,
 While Syracuse throws open gate and arms
 To welcome her besieger.

Ascander. By Artemis!
 Didst see him marching in?—Calippus on
 One side, Aristocles on t'other—their corselets white
 Fair shining in the sun, and each with locks
 Bright garlanded?—close treading them the guards—
 The hundred Grecian guards that watch by Dion,
 Then all his men in battle order placed?

Tim. But when his trumpeter blew from the gate,
 And all the people upward looked in silence
 While he declared them subjects but of Heaven,
 No wonder that each eye turned fount and flowed.

Asc. Then 'twas the wet cheek marked the noble heart,
 And the unwatered eye was shame.

Tim. And now
His soldiers rove throughout the city, while
The people lean from walls like branching trees
And shake a crop of blessings.

Asc. Kisses too!
E'en in the streets the women set their tables,
And from their wreathéd urns pour Cretan wine
For Dion's men.

Tim. What says my lord Speusippus?
The only sour-face in all Syracuse.

Speu. And cause enough. A pretty soldier, sir,
Who'd choose to march with flowers in his hand
Like smirking virgin on Diana's day!
I thought the tyrant would show tooth of war
And not turn tail and kennel.

Tim. [*Starting*] What noise is that?
It cuts the air unlike a feasting cry.

Speu. By Mars, I pray our swords will yet have airing,
And good fresh drink too!

Tim. Here's a man, Ascander.
He courts dame Trouble as she were his wench.

Speu. Tut, tut, my friends, I've but a soldier's relish
For an honest fight. What's there to fear? Besides,
I have a trick to dodge misfortune's blows.

Tim. What's that, Speusippus?

Speu. Why, if breaks my cup,
I think what now an it had been my vase
From Phelas' shop? I break my vase, and straight
I cry ho! ho! now had my house been burnt
That were a woe! But burns my house indeed,
I think of wife and child who perished not;
When dies my wife or son, I thank the gods
That Death crept all so near and touched not me.
And when his certain hour to clutch me comes
I'll think of famines, plagues, of earthquakes, floods,

And nations swept away. And still I'll cure
 Such broad affliction with the thought of how
 The Universe itself is but a shell
 To crackle when it please the hand that made it.
 So, friends, I mend each woe with its own cloth
 Till all looks well again.

Tim. Ay, but the patch
 Is greater than the garment.

[*Enter Calippus, hurrying*]

Speu. Ho, Calippus!

Cal. Hail, friends! But stay me not. I run to join
 The general without the city gates.

Asc. What? Dion?

Cal. Ay!

Tim. Without the gates?

Cal. 'Tis so.

Phillistus and the admiral have seized
 Excitement's topping hour to turn all hearts
 With fear's mad eloquence,—saying that Dion
 Comes to avenge his wrongs and set up rule
 More cruel than Dionysius dared. And so
 This gay and garlanded humanity
 Troop to these traitors, while lord Dion camps
 Without the city.

Speu. Gods! Did he go mildly?
 By Erebus' black daughter, I'd have turned
 And beat them to subjection. Not a blow?

Cal. He came to lift their yoke, not add another,
 And struck to heart with their ingratitude
 Gave them their choice, nor made warlike retort
 Beyond to warn them, with his finger lifted
 To yonder frowning castle, that the tyrant
 Was bayed, not conquered.

Tim. Conquered? No!
 The city never knew a woe till now.

Speu. Ay, Syracuse should with one general bray
Cry ass to Heaven. O, mullets of Abdera,
Would ye be kings, come reign in Sicily!

Asc. Phillistus has no force to meet the foe
Will belch from that black fort.

Speu. Haste, friends, to Dion!

Cal. You'll go?

Speu. What else? There'll be some good play yet.
Bray, Syracuse, thou populated ass!

[*Exeunt. The sunlight fades into twilight, and the full moon rises, right, rear, where the Lesser Harbor widens to the sea. Theano comes out of Phillistus' house and places fresh verbenas on the entrance altar. An Amazon follows her*]

The. Though gods forget me I'll remember them.
[*Sees the Amazon*] Stand back! I'll not be dogged!
[*The Amazon advances, folds her arms and takes station near Theano, who turns wearily from her and looks out upon the scene*]

Well for this earth

That Beauty keeps her court for gods not men,
Nor clouds for mortal mourning! O, fair city,
And fairer night, how strange and cold your smile
Upon my heart! . . . The slave is gone. That means
Phillistus comes.

[*Phillistus enters opposite and stands in shadow, gazing at Theano*]

Phil. I've little hope to cheat her more. Her eyes
Are at the windows of my heart and read
Each dark recess. Well, let love go if 't must.
The joys of hate are no less deep,—and she
Is mine! [*Approaches*] Theano? I am here.

The. I see.

Phil. My day of days has come! One kiss to crown it.
Art still unkind? Ah, sweet, where is the smile

Should dress thee in a fairer light than gilds
The crystal Thetis when Hyperion woos?
What! not a kiss.

The. This statue's sculptured lips
Are warmer, sir.

Phil. To me!

The. Though on your brow
Yon Victory should drop her high-held wreath
You'd be no more nor less than now. Who wears
The unseen chaplet given of spirit hands
To him whose soul is virtue, needeth not
Ambition's leafy handful that oft makes
The mortal brow vaunt as it grew the trees
Of all Olympus.

Phil. What a welcome here
For Sicily's new king! Know, my Theano,
That Dionysius is to castle beaten,
And treacherous Dion from the city thrust,
While Heraclides with me shares the power
Soon to be mine alone, for his fall, too,
Already is assured.

The. Then thou hast topped
The very summit of thy bold desire.

Phil. True! Aspiration now, lit like a lark
On Fortune's steeple, sings above all hazard.
My loved Theano, thou'rt queen of Syracuse;
We'll sleep to-night like happy royalty
In honor's bed.

The. The stone of Sisyphus
Will gather moss ere that may be, Phillistus.
You gave the safety of your stable house
To my bewildered grief. 'Twas noble, sir,
Though mine was woe would make a lion sheathe
His hungry claws and pass on softest foot.
But not for gold or throne will I be yours.

Not for all sapphires that have kissed in crowns,
All rubies that in deepest caves make day,
Would I be wife to you, or take your hand
Though to be plucked into Elysium!

Phil. So? By the fires of Dis, I'll end this play!
Dost think me your poor slave to sweat for naught?
An ass to bear your pack for chaff and straw?

The. My lord?

Phil. Did I risk all to play the nurse
Unto your tedious grief for a false lover?
All Syracuse knows you his fool, and yet
You'd play Penelope, and hope to sit
With tears of twenty years upon your cheeks!
O stare and wonder, gasp, and sir! and ho!
Weep if you will, and pray your baby prayers.
I've done with ah's and oh's and niceties!

The. O now this monster shows its head!

Phil. Go in! . . .

Wilt have me call the slave?

The. Beware, Phillistus!

Phil. Of what, or whom?

The. Of Heaven, sir!

Phil. Ha! ha!

What powers there owe not their reign to man?
The mind at holiday makes gods for sport
And gives them us for masters. When I'm crowned
I'll banish all these idle, meddling wits,
These boggy brains that spring with toadstool thrones
Decked with a deity.

The. And yet the gods

Now hear thee!

Phil. Say they do, love rules 'mong gods
As men. Doubt not they'll wink at my warm suit.

The. O, thy black soul will be the scorn of devils
When hell has claimed thee!

Phil. Know me blacker still!
Since hate must be the bond between our hearts,
I'll burn this into thine—thy father's death
Was by my hand made sure, that I might woo
Your foolish mother, who drank in turn my cup.
Yet shall I wear the blossom of your love
Fair on my bosom, and the fruit shall grow
To propagate my house. So silent, madam?
Is not this news? You would not coo for me;
May I not hear you rave?

The. Who, who could speak?
Now swirling harpies pluck away my soul,
And leave me here a shell that yet can breathe!

Phil. Ah, you shall breathe and live for me—for me!

The. O lust, whose sovereign heel treads life
As destiny had given bond and stamp for 't!

Phil. Ay, my desire would charter hell for breath
And blow her fires to desolate the world
Ere lose thee now!

[Enter a messenger from the bridge road]

Mess. Sir, Heracrides begs your instant aid!
The castled enemy have darted forth——

Phil. How? Where?

Mess. Behind the wall—across the bridge!
Like adder's tongue they've struck the sleeping city.
Now Heracrides calls for men to guard
The channel crossing.

Phil. Say I'll join him there.
At once! Away!

[Exit messenger]

Phil. *[Calls]* Ragunda! Amazon!

[Ragunda comes out of Phillistus' house]

Take in your charge, and keep a closer watch.
Your life, as hers, is short or long.

[To Theano] In, madam!

[Goes in with Ragunda. Enter second messenger]

Phil. Pray put your periods after news,
Not 'fore.

Phil. I'll come . . . when I have turned
A bolt within. [*Goes in*]

Second mess. [Pointing to house] There.

Third mess. The people rage against him, and have sent
Again to Dion, praying his return.

Phil. Dion! He'll come. Then farewell crown and life!
Where, men?

Third mess. The fight is hardest where the wall
Runs to the channel.

[*Exeunt toward bridge. The sky darkens, clouding the moon. On the road from the Greater Harbor enter men, women, and children, who run about confusedly in the darkness*]

Third voice. Dogs! They brought this hell on us!

Voices shrieking. The guards! The guards!

[*Soldiers of Dionysius rush on, road left, front, carrying brands which they cast about. They seize the people and put all to the sword*]

Soldiers. To Achridina! To the heights! Burn all!

[*Exeunt, right, rear, scattering brands, one of which lights the temple of Ceres seen through the trees, left. Enter citizens, left, front. They carry arms. Burning brands reveal the dead*]

First citizen. See, friends! Here lie our pictures as we'll be

A moment hence.

Second cit. No hope now but in Dion!

Third cit. [*As Dracon enters*] Dracon!

Dracon. All lost—all lost. Put up your swords.

The Carthaginian fleet lies in the bay,

And by the sea-gate to the castle fort

Empties her men into the tyrant's hand!

Second cit. O Syracuse!

Dracon. And next upon this news

Phillistus and the admiral desert us,

Flying to Dionysius.

Voices. Traitors! dogs!

Dracon. And now though Dion should forgive our baseness——

Voices. He will! he will!

Dracon. His force and ours united

Can not make stand against the strengthened foe.

Voices. O woeful night! O bloody, bloody night!

Third cit. Now sword and fire will make such havoc
'mong us

There 'll not be breath enough in all the city

To say good-morrow to the sun.

[*Cheers without, right, front. Enter a warrior at the head of troops. He wears helmet and carries shield*]

Warrior.

Shame, shame!

O, Syracusans, shame! If ye be men,
Let battle take the garb of order, and death
Array itself in decency! I've brought
A band of noble Leontines to strike
With who shall prove no coward! Lift your swords
Till Victory sees them shining through the night
And knows which way to bend her doubtful wings!
On, on, my men! On, Syracusans, on!

[All go off left, cheering. Enter Gylippus, right, rear, wounded]

Gylippus. I'll drop me here till flame or steel o'er-
take me. [Falls down]

Menodes. [Entering] Gylippus? Wounded?

Gy. Deep enough. No matter.

Wounds are Bellona's favors. Do you bleed?

Men. I lose an arm. 'Twas a warm kiss that took it.

Gy. Hast seen the stranger and his Leontines?
He goes through fire as 'twere a pastime loved,
Shaking the burning timbers from his back
As they were flies.

Men. Thrice has he formed
The citizens for charge, though night and flame
War on confusion's side.

Gy. Ocrastes comes
With ships that treble all sent out from Carthage.

Men. Then Dion to the rescue speedily,
Or Syracuse is ashes! [Shouts without]

Gy. Dion! He's here!
Now Mercy cloister close, and stern Revenge,
Long patient, take the sword!

Men. Ho, who are these?

[Enter the warrior in combat with Phillistus, left, rear]

Gy. The stranger with Phillistus! Here's my blow!
[Attempts to rise]

Men. No need! He falls!

Phil. [Down] Your mercy!

Warrior. Take it—death!

Thou single confine of all men's corruption,

Die—die—and poison ghosts in hell!

[*Flames issue from Phillistus' house. Servants rush out, shrieking*]

Phil. [*Half rising and looking at the flames*] My house
In flames! Thanks, gods, for this! Proud mistress, burn
Behind your bars, and to your black remains
Be your Ocrastes welcome!

Warrior. Aid me, Heaven!

[*Rushes into house*]

Phil. That voice—O traitor! He will save her! Ay
He'll tread through hell nor burn his feet!

I die now as they kiss! Ocrastes—O!

The rest I'll tell to gaunt and gibbering shades.

[*Dies*]

[*Curtain falls and rises upon the same scene in ruins, several hours later. Wrecks smoulder in foreground. In rear the flames from Achridina throw light on the untouched castle and island. Noise of battle comes from left. Enter from bridge road Dion, Panthus, Calippus, Aristocles, Speusippus, and others*]

Dion. Thanks for my life. 'Twas bravely rescued,
friends.

Cal. My lord, you do us wrong so to expose the arm
That props our hope.

Dion. Nay, not with me, Calippus,
The battle rests, but with the unknown warrior
Gods lend our fainting cause. Where'er he strikes
The gashéd enemy look on their wounds
And turn like death-met fear to seek a cover.

Aris. Ay! Once he fell, but rose with such new might
He seemed like Mars who, tripped on Trojan field,

Uprising threw his shoulders 'gainst the clouds
And darkened heaven.

Panthus. By Zeus, he'd dare to hale
Rhamnusia from her wingéd car and turn
Her gryphons to the winds!

Dion. Back to his aid!

Pan. Your wound, my lord.

Cal. Give valor space to breathe.
There'll be brave puffing ere the wall is down.
The channel banks it close, but we may breach it.

Speu. It must be done, and must, sir, captains may
In war.

Dion. Then to it! We waste breath.

Pan. Stay, sir!
We go—not you—for when our general bleeds
Each man afield bleeds with him. See, your wound!
By 'Thaumas' claw-foot maids, 'tis past a scratch!

Dion. I feel not this—but O, fair Syracuse!
Rock in thy fiery cradle till the sea
Gets up to weep, and bending gods pour down
Remorseful tears to drown the reddening shame
That blushes o'er the moon and writes the name
Of hell upon the stars!

[*A sudden burst of noise and flame from the heights of
Achridina*]

Art gone, my city? . . .

Ah, fallen Dionysius, must thou
Lose all, then cast thy soul to swell the loss?
It is thy kingly reputation burns,
With all that thou mightst own in fair Elysium!

[*Shouting, left*]

Speu. The wall! the wall! They charge!

Pan. The stranger leads!

Ho, come, Speusippus!

Dion. On! on, on, my friends!

[*Exeunt, left. The flames from Achridina die down. Semi-darkness. Men enter and creep about the blackened ruins. Soft light in the East*]

First man. Now Ceres mend our bones! Will 't e'er be light?

Second man. Ay, yonder winks the dawn.

First man. This blindfold war
Is Horror past familiar—her leper cheek
Bowsing both cheeks like mistress privileged.

Third man. Gods keep us! Many a man has died this night

Upon his dear friend's sword. The treacherous torch
And threatening glare of flames too oft betrayed
The panic-glazéd eye.

[*Domenes rushes on from left. Speusippus following*]

First man. Domenes?

Second man. Ay,

The captain of the tyrant's guards. The Greek
Is on him!

Third man. Down!

Dom. Spare me! I'll give you news!

Speu. Live while your tongue wags. Speak! What of the fleet

From Italy?

Dom. All lost but one poor sail
That brings the desperate news. The tyrant mad
With this is bound for flight with what is left
Of Carthage.

Speu. Ah, Ocrastes dead?

Dom. Drowned, sir.

Speu. And Dion's wife?

Dom. She's in the castle—safe.

Speu. And flies with Dionysius? Speak, man!

Dom. She begs to stay, but he may force her off.

Speu. Then we must stop this play and take the castle!
Drag off! You're past all harm. [*Going off, left*] Now
one charge more! [*Exit*]

[*Light breaks over Lesser Harbor*]

Voices. Light! light!

First man. O blessed Zeus! And yet I fear
The babe-eyed Dawn will sicken with what's here
And creep back into night.

Second man. No, day comes on,—
The red-capped nurse that in her bosom hides
The cherub Dawn, while her broad smile
Goes round the world.

Third man. A smile on this?

Second man. Ay, ay,
Her stomach's for all sights, and ulcerous earth
She'll kiss as close as fountain-laughing vales.

First man. By Ares' bloody dame, here's work enough
To keep the gods a year from holiday!

[*Shouts without, left. Enter citizens and soldiers in joyful confusion*]

Voices. 'Tis down! The wall is down! The castle's
taken!

A voice. The tyrant has fled by sea!

Another. And none too soon!

Another. He'd pay his head else!

Cries without. Dion! Dion! Dion!

[*Enter Dion with friends and citizens*]

Dion. Shout not my name, for 'twas the noble stranger
Who won this night. Seek him, Calippus,—beg
His presence here with brow unhelmeted,
That we may look where valor hath her home.

Cal. He's gone, my lord.

Dion. Gone?

Cal. Vanished, as the sea
Had lapped him up.

Dion. More like the gods have stooped
To draw him home again.

[*Looks about at the desolation and groans*]

Cal. Your wound, my lord?

Dion. No, no. I weep for dying Syracuse.
Now is her glory like a weary star
Withdrawn from fortune's heaven. O fairest city,
Whose beauty drew the feet of farthest kings,
And set a value in the poorest eye
To be a storied heritage to sons
When sires who saw had passed! Even thou hast won
From cold oblivion but an ashen cloak!

Aris. 'Tis tyranny lies here, not Syracuse.
Ay, from these mournéd ashes, friend, will spring
A brighter glory than they bury now,
And this night's woe bear fruitage of a peace
When Time shall hang as thick with happy hours
As Flora's breast with buds.

Speu. By Hector's spur,
It pricks to think this valor-breasted night,
Bristling with action's pikes toward charging death,
Should e'er beg life of tolerant memory,
Thankful for so much breath as may endow
A musty adage in the mouth of peace,
Or shepherd song piped by an idle rill
To meek-eared violets in noonday shade!
O! O! my lady Fame must have her nap.
Soft, Mars, put on thy slippers!

[*Enter soldiers dragging Heraclides*]

Dion. Who is this?

First soldier. My lord, a prisoner.

Second sol. 'Tis Heraclides,
My lord.

Voices. Death! Death to Dion's enemy!

Dion. What? Heraclides?

Pan. Ay! [*Drawing his sword*] The blow is mine!

Dion. Put up your sword, brave Panthus. Nay, put up!

Pan. [*Dropping weapon*] 'Twere better used, sir.

Dion. Heraclides, speak.

What would you say? Do you repent this night?

Her. All men, my lord, repent the step that brings
Their cloud-high foreheads to earth. I lie so low
That Fortune's sun-bent eye will find no more
My sunken ruin,—and but one comfort left,
I can descend no further.

Pan. Ay, to hell!

Her. Ambition knows no hell but failure. Strike!
You put me out of torture, not send me to it.

Dion. Life only dreams her hells till death's be found.

Her. 'Tis easy thus to speak from victory's height
Whence all looks fair,—so fair misfortune seems
Sole lie o' the world. We bite truth with the dust,
My lord.

Voices. His sentence! Death! The traitor! Death!

Dion. Peace, friends.

Voices. Death! Seize him! Kill him!

Cal. Dion speaks!

Voices. Hear Dion!

Dion. Not alone in martial venture
Do victors win their bays. Let each of us,
Trampling on anger and contending malice
That from our natures thrust out serpent heads,
Forgive this captive foe, and crown our brows
With wreaths of victory outshining all
That shake from war-decked temples. Hear, my lord.
By the power I hold in the true hearts and minds
Of noble Syracusans, I forgive thee.

Voices. No, no!

Cal. My lord, be warned. He has a tongue
Would flatter Zeus from heaven, and common minds
He calls as flies to honey.

Dion. Nay, his sweet
Is wormwood now. Because this foolish man
Has walked in sin, shall I too blemish virtue?

Voices. Revenge! Revenge!

Dion. Who offers injury,
And who revenges it, ply the same thread
Of Nature's scarlet. Heraclides, go.
Thou'rt free.

Her. I do not kneel to you—a man—
But to the god that houses in your shape.
O noble Dion, what deed may speak my thanks
Too great for tongue?

Dion. Arise, go forth, and where
You once betrayed a thousand hearts lead one
To safety.

[*Exit Heraclides, rabble following*]

Cal. [*To Speusippus*] Sir, what think you?

Speu. 'Tis gross error.
He'll breathe a life into the stones o' the street
Ere lack for followers.

Cal. Come, let us see.

[*Exeunt Calippus and Speusippus, others following*]

Dion. [*To his Grecian guards*] Go nurse your wounds,
brave friends. I need no more
Your arms, but ever need your love. You with them,
Panthus. You know my wishes.

Pan. Ay, my lord.

[*Exeunt Panthus and guards. Aristocles remains with
Dion*]

Dion. My friend! [*They embrace*] No tears! We'll
water joy hereafter.

Now there is much to do. Wilt seek Calippus for me
And make him governor of the castle?

Aris.

Ay. [Exit]

Dion. [Alone] Now red revolt with opened veins lies low
Fast paling to her death; and silence deep
As takes the mother's ear who waits the step
Of her dead soldier son, creeps o'er the world.
And to my lonely eye the universe
Shrinks to a monument writ with one grief.
Ocrastes, couldst, when locked within my love—
Ay, bedded in the core—to vermin turn
And gnaw the heart thou breathedst in? . . . O youth,
Among life's strangely flowering hopes thou art
The blossom of deceit! When we have watched
Thy tender green peer up—thy opening buds
That wrap their silken promise round our fears—
And spent our prayers like nurturing rains upon thee
That thou mayst bloom above our pride and hang
The rose or spring upon our frosty age,
How dost thou droop, till o'er thy cankered wreck
We dew thy fall with tears! . . . O beauteous bud,
What deadly aconite cast its foul shade
Upon thy blowing grace? My son, my son,
I am no warrior when I think of thee,
Else would my sword be out. A father's eye
Is turned upon thy sin, and all the wrong
Thou didst to me half righted with a tear . . .
. . . The sun comes flaming from the sea as though
Another Syracuse burnt on the waves . . .
Why stand I here? The castle doors are open,
And therein waits the fairest face of earth
To shine for me To shine? O human sun,
Unlike thy skyey peer, thy light is dimmed
With what thou'st looked upon. Thy beams have drunk

Pollution deep that now detested falls
Upon my soul.

[*Re-enter Aristocles*]

Aris. All's well, my lord.

Dion. All's well?

That's strange news for my heart. Wilt go with me?

Aris. Whither, my lord?

Dion. Into yon castle. . . . Come.

[*Exeunt. Curtain*]

ACT V

SCENE: *A room in the castle. Brentio alone.*

Bren. By Hector, we've had a night of it. I must stop now and count my fingers and toes, for I'm sure there's some of me missing. First, my gold! [*Counts gold*] All here. But poor mistress Theano that I promised to carry through fire and flood for this same sweet gold was burnt up last night. Well, my lord Ocrastes is dead too, so I'll not be called to account. Had it been flood now I might have kept my promise, but fire—I never could abide a singed beard.

[*Enter Tichus*]

Ho, Tichus! These are wars, sir! These are wars! Have you killed your man this night?

Tich. A score, I hope.

Bren. Well, I've naught to say. Let deeds talk. A bragging tongue is Fame's best grave-digger, though it wag i' the mouth of Hercules. But I spared some, I'll say that. They cried so for mercy, poor fellows! Not a man of 'em was ready to die, by his own count.

Tich. If you wait for that you'll die swearing blood is green for all you'll even draw of it. When the gods promised that no man should die till he was ready old Charon sold his boat.

Bren. There's a stick-penny for you. What was his bargain?

Tich. A feather bed, that he might sleep off idleness.

Bren. Ah, but you should have seen me when a villain

pitted at me with three pikes. A murderous three-handed deformity, by the truth o' my eyes he was!

Tich. Then you shook your sword, I warrant!

Bren. No, bless me, I shook my feet.

Tich. Man, you didn't run?

Bren. No, I flew. I wore Mercury's feathers, I tell you.

Tich. Shame, Brentio! A coward's leg will never overtake Fame.

Bren. Ay, but when a man must leap the grave to catch her, let take her who will! I'm done. Have you been through the castle?

Tich. No.

Bren. Come then. There are sights to be seen. Mostly in the cellars, where every soldier gets a bottle for his song.

[*Sings*]

Who will not be merry then let him go drown,
Let him go drown,

In as rosy a bumper as ever went down,
As ever went down,

And he'll bob up, he'll bob up, by Bacchus, he will,
As hail a good fellow as ever wet gill!

Here are our masters! I'm gone. A hero may drink, but work—never! [*Exit*]

Tich. There's more trouble ahead than the claw o' my wit can scratch. Ocrastes' death makes one less in the pother, but I've eyes in my head, and there's no doubt my master is in love with the lady Aratea, and one lover can make more trouble than a score of extra husbands. Well, well, when thy cares bewilder thee take time and wine for thy counsellors. So let it work out. [*Exit. Aristocles and Dion appear in hall partly visible through wide open doors, rear. Aristocles enters and comes front. Dion remains without, gazing down, moody and meditative*]

Aris. Deep, deep, my thoughts, dive to some bed of
death

In my wide-regioned self, nor come again
Like sea-returnéd corpse, with livid grin
And foul, accreted horror, to beg anew
For burial.

[*Dion comes in and walks slowly across to Aristocles*]

You'll see her now?

Dion.

See whom?

Aris. Your wife.

Dion.

My wife? Have I a wife?

Aris.

She waits

Your summons by Diana's altar.

Dion.

Ah!

So near?

Aris. Theano waits with her.

Dion.

My niece?

She's safe?

Aris. By miracle. The unknown knight
Bore her from out Phillistus' burning house.

Dion. Still swells our debt to him.

Aris.

You'll see her now?

Dion. See whom, my friend?

Aris.

Your wife, sir,—Aratea.

Dion. When you repeat the name I half believe
I have a wife. Your voice was ever true,
Nor fed me with the rifled husks of speech.

. . . Was she not fair?

Aris.

My lord?

Dion.

How fair, think you?

Aris. Who, sir, could say? Such beauty scorns all
words

And writes itself but in the wondering eye.

Dion. You shift. You shift. Your tongue is beauty's
pencil.

Did heaven lack a goddess you might limn
A fairer than a Venus for the place.
Speak on. Tell me her sum to the last doit.
The balance of a hair—a smile unborn—
I'd not strike off.

Aris. [*Coldly*] You know her worth, my lord.

Dion. Nay, the appraising eye when fixed too near
The thing it loves distorts the sweet proportion.
You can adjust your gaze, take stand to bring
Her beauty to perfection's single-point.

Aris. What matter? All is yours.

Dion. Ah, if 'twere mine
I'd care not, happy then to know 'twas mine.
But when we've lost we're moved to question, sir,
Else are we crippled twice in our estate,
Once in the loss, again to know it not.

Aris. Strange speech, my lord. I hardly know your
tongue.

Dion. You can not understand, for you've no wife.
No more have I. But once . . . Yes, yes, I'll see her.
Wilt bring her here?

Aris. I bring her? Here? To you?

Dion. If 'tis too sad a service——

Aris. Nay, I go. [*Exit*]

Dion. I am forgot in his great pity of her.

[*Enter Calippus*]

Cal. Lord Dion, Heraclides begs to see you.

Dion. Is he alone?

Cal. Ægisthus comes with him.

Dion. Bid them into the banquet hall.

Cal. My lord,

You will not see them?

Dion. Ay, there's naught to fear.

Tell them I'll join them soon.

[*Exit Calippus*]

Now riven heart,
Close firm as mountain bulwark that beats off
The Thracian wind.

[*Enter Aristocles with Theano and Aratea*]

Dion. [*To Theano*] Good welcome, niece.

[*He embraces Theano, and looks silently at Aratea*]

Ara. [*Falteringly*] My lord——

Dion. Your friend, your lover—ay, your slave,—
but not

Your lord, sweet Aratea.

Ara. O! Condemned!

Dion. Not that—but——

Ara. Then you'll hear me?

Dion. No! Your voice

Renews in me the battle that I thought
Was fought to end.

Ara. But I could say, my lord——

Dion. Ay, you could say what would revoke the sun,
Turn back into his heart his golden spears,
And from the sapphire battlements make pour
Surpriséd night! How easy then to shake
The scarce-sworn vow from my unfended breast
To melt like snowflake caught in lap of June!

Ara. O, sir——

Dion. You've that in you defeats resolve,
And casts in broil the mind's high chancery.
I will not hear a word! 'Tis my defence,
Not cruelty. All honor shall be thine
Apart from me.

Ara. What honor may be mine
Apart from thee?

Dion. Nay, question not my justice!

Ara. You think me vile, my lord?

Dion. Mayhap I do!
Were there no poisons left in Sicily?

No rank, night-sweating herbs whose bane might work
 Proud honor's choice? Were daggers grown too blunt
 To pierce fair flesh? What, not a rope—nor cord?
 No garters—strips of silken robes——

Aris. O, spare

To accuse a soul who erred that she might still
 Be true to Heaven.

Dion. True? By Pallas! True?

Aris. Sir, she obeyed the gods who bid us wait
 And work on earth our destiny.

Dion. The gods

Sometimes write in our fates that to seek death
 Is what will solely please them.

Aris. Must I see

The sun of justice in you set?

Dion. Ah, friend,

Do you not see 'tis my desire that cries
 To keep her still? 'Tis passion weighing doubts,
 Hoping to find them light as rising vapors.

Aris. Though she had struck at life within her heart,
 Swart Atropos had dropped her shears for pity,
 Nor helped so fair a woe to death. Yet you——

Dion. O, she is pure, but not to me! 'Tis stamped
 Upon my soul that she is dark to me
 Though fair to Heaven!

The. Hear her, sir. She took

No vows. Her lips were dumb——

Dion. O, vows! You speak

Of words?

The. But——

Dion. Silence, niece!

Aris. Receive her, sir.

Dion. Never, my friend! What can you know of this?

Aris. I know she is Pandora without taint!

The secret pattern lost in mourning heaven

When rapt Hephaistos shaped the perfect clay
By Pallas' breath made vital! Sir, receive her!
Let me implore it by our years of love.

Dion. Thou'rt dear to me as man may be to man,
But wert thou dear as god may be to god,
I could not grant thy wish.

Aris. Then she is mine!
And, could I snatch a tear from Dian's cheek
When bowed at secret altar she renews
Her vestal sanctity, 'twould not be less
Unspotted to my love! O, Aratea,
Wilt come? My wife? Say not thou lov'st, but cling
Unto my breast as trusting bud to bough,
Or but uplook with eyes whose shaken sea
Is calmed in mine.

Dion. Ye powers that rule my being,
Stop every conscious note but wonder!

Aris. Ah,
I've heard it said Apollo loved my mother,
And I could wish it true, that god-descended
I might embrace thyself, who surely art
Of high Olympus born—whose mortal part
Wears beauty as the night her stars.

Dion. Behold
Me desolate, ye gods! Is this my friend?
Nay, thou hast given friendship such a blow
She dies from earth, nor in eternal groves
May she be healed.

Aris. Not mine, but yours, the blow.

Dion. Ocrastes struck me, and I rose again.
My wife was taken, and I lived to sigh.
But you—O, now the quick of life is seized
With mortal ill. Now shakes my earth to centre,
And on me falling bow her peakéd tops.
Even here and now I die. All fellowship

Forego with gallant breath, and lay me down
Like forest trunk that pours its wasting heart
From every loppéd limb.

[*Theano attempts to comfort him*]

Go from me, girl.

My wounded senses shrink away from life
Till gentlest touches are as brands of pain.
Dumb be my lips. I'll speak no more on earth.

Ara. Keep you that word! Thy silence is my speech!
Know, Dion, though the knowing now is naught,
Ocrastes left me ere his marriage vow
Was cold in air, nor took one bridal kiss.
Nor have these eyes beheld him since that hour,
Nor will the eye of mortal see him more.
The sea now holds him to her buried heart.
Some shelly couch washed with a Nereid's tears
Is his last bed.

Dion. And you untouched . . . untouched.

Ara. I grieve you did not know me better, sir.
You too, my lord Aristocles. Those cords—
Those daggers—poisons—had been quickly found——

Dion. Untouched! No bridal kiss! My blindness goes.
But Heaven, in pity, shut me dark again,
For I have wronged Ocrastes—who is dead.
How could your woman heart not know the truth—
That he thus saved you from a baser touch
To be restored all perfect, pure to me?
And he is dead. Give me your pity, gods!
Now we will mourn, Theano. Here, my daughter.
Our griefs let marry in our kissing tears.

[*Embraces Theano*]

But there's a brightness yet in this dark woe.

[*Advances to Aratea*]

Once more, my love, my wife, you are all mine.

[*Aristocles steps before Aratea*]

What mean you now?

Aris. To guard my own. For you
The pearl of opportunity is lost.
Briareus' hands could not now snatch it back
Where't pales on time's retreating wave.

Dion. By Mars,
I'll pass you, sir!

The. Let Aratea speak.
Is't not for her to choose?

Dion. A wedded woman
Can have no choice.

The. O, Dion, be a god,
Not man, and grant it.

Aris. Choose thine own. As free
As new created star, fix where thou wilt.

Dion. Ay, choose! Thou art my wife. Thy holy truth
Will fail thee not. Speak! End this bitter folly
From which the gods would turn shame-burning face!

The. Not if all tale be true.

Dion. You speak too much!

Ara. First swear, my lords, however I may choose,
You'll still be friends, as honored and as true
As though this face I loathe had never come
Between your loves.

Aris. I swear to you my friend
Shall be my friend.

Ara. You, sir?

Dion. I will forgive him,
For love has made him mad.

Ara. Swear it by Heaven.

Dion. By Heaven. Now wilt speak?

Ara. Such sacred oaths
Need sacrificial rite, and here I give
My blood.

[Suddenly draws a dagger and attempts to stab herself. Aristocles, watching eagerly, seizes dagger, and supporting her speaks wildly]

Aris. Think not that you can fly me now!

Though thou wert dead still wouldst thou live for me
In such dear semblance of remembered show
That I would seek to woo thy houseless spirit
E'er give thee o'er unclasped to Heaven!

Ara. Ah! *[Releases herself]*

Dion. But now she lives, and living she is mine.

Aris. Her lips, not yours, shall say!

Dion. Lost man, thou'rt crazed.

I pity thee. Speak, wife.

Ara. O, blow me, winds,

To some unpeopled sphere, and find me peace
As sweet as his who cropped the first day fruits
Of green unharrowed earth!

Dion. This is no answer.

Ara. My lord, if 't be my prayers can save my soul,
In some far fane I'll serve the priestess' cup
Till Death is kind and calls me.

Dion. *[Seizing her arm]* Answer me!
Art mine, or his?

Ara. Till truth no more is truth
Thou art my lord.

[Aristocles turns and moves apart, covering his face with his mantle. Aratea sinks feebly and Theano supports her]

Dion. *[To Aristocles]* Now you've your answer! Niece,
Lead out my wife.

[Theano takes Aratea from the room, through curtained entrance, left]

Aristocles—my friend—

I pity and forgive thee. When Love drives,
His chariot reins are veins of mortal men,

Who fain must course the bright god's destiny
 Nor reckon the road. 'Tis strange—not that you loved her—
 But that I did not dream it must be so,
 She being the top and bloom of all her sex,
 As you, my lord, of yours. A mortal judge
 Would grant you her, but God gave her to me,
 And I doubt not He blundered to a purpose
 Beyond our dream. Ah me, the night's red eyes
 Looked fatal on the sail that bore you hither.
 Cursed be my prayers that drew you from your Athens!
 Farewell! For you must go. Small Sicily
 No more may hold us both.

[*Re-enter Theano*]

The. She's better, sir.

Dion. That's well.

[*Enter Calippus, through hall, rear*]

Your news?

Cal. Our saviour of the night
 Now waits to see you.

Dion. The warrior? Ask him in!

[*Exit Calippus*]

The. I'll speak the thanks he waited not to hear,
 Although my heart gives none for this poor life.

[*Enter warrior, rear, still in arms and helmeted*]

Dion. Thou'rt welcome as the gods. As lightning
 makes

The world now bright, now dark, you fill and void
 The circle of our sense, but, here or there,
 'Tis ours to grant you what you will if power
 Be in us.

Warrior. [*Kneeling*] For one thing I sue—forgiveness.

[*Removes helmet*]

Dion. Ocrastes!

Oc. Ay.

Dion. How couldst be hid from me
Though veiled in seven-fold steel?

The. Not dead—not dead——

Oc. [*Embracing Theano*] My heart, look up. The long
tale of my sins

Will be as virtue's song when in love's ear
'Tis whispered. Nay, weep not. Those woes are sealed.

The. O, canst forgive me?

Oc. It is I must sue.

Nay, nay, my sweet, no liquid gem drop now
On misery's broken altar, too long rich
With these eyes' jewels.

The. Ah, thou'rt mine . . . still mine.

Oc. Ere I have done your constancy shall hear
Such music of true love you'll think those birds
That move the gentle concords of the night
In these bright locks make bower continual.

[*Kisses her hair*]

For every hour of your ungracious star,
With the full circuit of a smiling moon
I'll pension you, till covetous of time
You'll wish your sorrows had been more, not less.

Dion. Not one embrace for me?

Oc. Before I make

My plea for pardon?

Dion. That may wait, my son,
For empty hours. This is too full of joy.

Oc. I did not go to Italy, my lord,
But to the Leontines——

Dion. O, go not back
To read the bloodprints of bewildered feet.
Now as the soft life-wooing breath that moves
So swift upon the track of orient storms
That ere the woeful people dry their tears
Earth is new-clad in garments of the sun

And balm is in the air like blessings winged,
Fanning delight in every lifted cheek,
So treads this hour at heel of flying woe.

[*Enter Brentio, rear*]

Bren. My lord, the people in the banquet hall are drinking all the cellars dry. You'd weep to see it, sir.
[*Sees Theano and Ocrastes. Looks in bewilderment from one to the other, claps hand to his purse and runs out*]

Dion. The slave's beset.

Oc. He's drunk, my lord.

Dion. I had forgot Heraclides. [*Going*] Ocrastes, come. We'll not so soon be parted. You to my wife, Theano. [*Exeunt Dion and Ocrastes, rear; Theano through curtains, left*]

Aris. [*Alone*] Dion, how oft hast sworn I was thy dearest,
Yet go to happiness while I droop here
As to my grave. Nor dost thou need me more
Than quickest life its century-buried dead.
Yet one is yon, behind those curtains close,
Who starves even as you feed. Her love is mine.
By Heaven, I know 'tis mine! Yet I must go—
Leave her to perish. Ay, her flower soul
Not long will bear the weight of unloved love.

[*Soldiers enter hall, rear, drinking and singing*]

O, Helen had a rosy lip,
And only one might kiss it,
But all of mistress wine may sip
And she will never miss it.

Ho, brothers all are we,
Brothers all are we!
We've sworn to the last red drop,
Be it found in a heart or found in a cup,
And brothers all we be!

A soldier's trade it is to die,
 And what poor fools are they
 Who for a soldier's death will sigh—
 'Tis all in a business way.

Ho, brothers all are we, &c.

[Exeunt drunkenly]

Aris. O, I am wounded in the character
 I sought to build so giant-like that as
 A figure on the skies all men would see
 And longing upward scorn their baser state!
 Now am I grown deforméd with a scar
 That all eternity can not make fair.
 . . . To go . . . nor say farewell. To go . . . to go,
 And see no more her face . . . that face which is
 Imagination sighing in a word.
 That face where Beauty with her mysteries
 Sits listening to Magi of the air,
 Or ocean lapping on eternal sands.
 'Tis as a star should to a flower turn,
 And yet remember heaven.

[Approaches curtains and kneels]

Fare thee well!

O thou whose body is a living urn
 Full of distilléd sweets from every mead
 Where Love hath set a flower! Whose soul compacts
 All earth's divinity, and leaves profane
 All space where it is not!

[Arises and starts out slowly. At the door he looks back. Aratea appears at curtains, but does not see him]

O, I must fly . . .

Must fly . . . nor hear again her voice that lures
 As it would draw the fallen golden world
 O'er desert ages to man's memory.

Ara. [*Sees him and advances*] You here, Aristocles?

Aris. Wilt say farewell?

Ara. [*Going back*] Farewell.

Aris. No word but that?

Ara. That is too much.

Aris. [*Approaching*] Too much?

Ara. I—faint again. Nay, touch me not!

Aris. Am I so perilous to thee? My hand
Has had no commerce yet with cruelty.

Ara. The moon with silver foot steps not more soft
Among the tears of night than falls thy touch
On me, who, poorer than the night, must go
Uncomforted. Thou'lt leave this place at once
If thou hast pity.

Aris. Ah, had I a heart
Great-swelling as the sad Molurian mount,
Or piléd peaks that wreck the sailing moon,
'Twere not enough to melt upon this woe!

Ara. Wretched, O wretched me! To be the curse
Of what is best on earth!

Aris. Peace, unjust lips!
Thou art a rose that, rooted in Elysium,
Leans sorrowing to the world that it may see
What beauty is and know then how to dream.
O, close those other worlds, your eyes, that I
May live in this! [*She moves back*]

Stay, I must speak!

Ara. No, no!

Aris. And you must hear me.

Ara. Silence, sir, is best.
In her deep bosom let our woes be buried,
As Night doth shepherd all the cares of day
Till Heaven think the world asleep, though 'neath
The dark are hot and staring eyes.

Aris. Nay, nay,

Put courage in thy heart to gender wings
That we may dart as swallows to the sun
And tread the rosy air where love may breathe!

Ara. My lord——

Aris. Come! come! Greece is our home of light.
There you, my wife, shall rule a lesser heaven
And tutor souls for God's. [*She turns to go*]

One moment hear me!

You love me, Aratea.

Ara. Fare you well.

Aris. [*Against the curtains*] First say thou lovest me!

Dost thou not hear

A voice at night when calm Eirene leads
Sleep to all eyes but thine?

Ara. Have mercy, sir!

Aris. What leap of soul or dream of sense hast thou
That is not sweeter for you hold me dear?
When Theia's daughter, priestess gray, unhoods
Her morning face, and all her clouds of rose
With flying petals light the waking world,
Does not your ecstasy swim on the flood
Of my remembered eyes, and their delight
Re-jewel beauty's diadem?

Ara. I beg——

Aris. When throbbing wonders of a dying sun
Trail off their glories like escaping souls,
And Night with lustred heaven round her neck
Lures up immensities, whose spirit longs
Through all your longings till it leads your own
To crowned and still content?

Ara. Will you not go?

Aris. And when thy gaze is on the sibyl sea,
Striving to read her ancient wave-writ script,
And break the seal a differing language sets

Upon her mighty tongue, whence cometh peace
Like full and silent answer to your heart?

Ara. If this be love, then let it be mine still.
For it may be without a touch of hands.
Ay, though in Athens you must live and move
Still are you mine in mysteries and joys.
I thank you, sir, for having taught me love
That is forever holy, wronging none.

Aris. Nay, Aratea, man can not be God
And pipe all Heaven through a mortal reed!
Come to my arms, O life and soul of me!
As chaste verbenas on an altar kiss,
As streamlets join in soft approving shade,
As clouds immingle in the glancing sun,
So shall our loves unchided of the skies.
Not leafy choirs that anthem Flora in,
Or those sweet songs that in day's virgin hour
Their hymeneal pour from feathery pipes
That stale Apollo's lute, shall win more smiles
From the consenting gods!

Ara. O, music, breath
Of sin!

Aris. Not so! To love thee not were sin!
The adoration of so fair a soul
Would save me were I damned! And thou art mine.
By stars that knit their motions with our fates,
The season-childing sun, great Heaven itself——

Ara. O, not by Heaven!

Aris. And Heaven's all-greater Lord,
Who gives us souls that we may love all beauty,
And gives us beauty that our souls may love it,
I swear thee mine!

Ara. Your oath—your oath to Dion!

Aris. Thou'rt mine above all vows! Thou canst not let

A mock-enthronéd custom speak to God?
 An atom fettered with nice consequence
 Bar up the gates of love that are as wide
 As His earth-belting arms?

Ara. No pity, none.

Aris. My heart, say thou wilt come.

Ara. 'Tis death.

Aris. 'Tis life!

Come now, O now, else are we cast apart
 Far as the dismal Night heaves her vast sigh,
 Far as the laboring Chaos breathing blows,—
 Perchance to hurl eternally about
 The farthest stars that from opposéd heavens
 Dart fiery scouts that die ere they have met,
 So long their journey is. Or, gloomier fate,
 Condemnéd sit like stones that once could weep
 Forever in the cave of ended things
 That deep in some immortal Lemnos lies
 Nor ever opens its dank gates to day!
 O, come ere we are lost! Be thy fair arms
 The rainbow girdle to this longing storm
 And its rude breast will pillow thee as soft
 As Leda when, cool-rocked on lily couch,
 The great down-bosomed god swam to her love!
 Come, Aratea, heart of life! O now
 This pulse speaks back to mine—this bosom throbs
 Like heaven's Artemis unto her own!

[*Kisses her*]

O kiss that holds the mornings of all time,
 And dewy seasons of the ungathered rose,
 Plant once again thy summer on my lips!

Ara. How dear is death that kisses with such breath!
 Thine eyes are seas where sighing ardors blow
 Love's argosies from island bowers of dream
 Into my heart. Save me, Aristocles!

O me, I'm netted in these golden curls
 With web as sure as that the crafty god
 Once wove round Aphrodite's blushing bed
 And trapped great Ares, sport for gazing heaven!
 O, I am lost! [*Casts him off*]

Away! away! Nor may
 My lips move more on earth but in a prayer
 To cleanse this moment's madness from our souls!

Aris. Wouldst leave me now to death?

Ara. Ay, unto death,
 Lest Truth and Honor die! Thy way's not mine.
 My aspen soul would shake its house of fear,
 Imagine thunder in the bee's soft hum,
 And mountain-rocking winds in harmless air
 That would not move the purple down of clouds.
 To so great compass now my horror grows
 That I myself seem Chaos. 'Tis as I stood
 'Mong heaps of ruined destinies with life
 Still mourning in them. I am still for fear
 Another world will crumble as I stir.

Aris. Move, Aratea! Speak!

Ara. Dost hear that sound?
 It is the rustle of tear-dropping gods
 Who gather all the golden virtues up
 Vouchsafed to earth and trampled low by man.
 See how they rise with their immortal store,
 A moving radiance like the march of light,
 And leave us dark for want of what they bear?
 Far, far till stars must upward look to see—
 A sapphire trail through the ethereal rose!
 Now—earth and darkness—and you call it love!
 [*Sinks down*]

Aris. [*Lifting her*] Fair soul, be mortal yet!

Ara. [*Going from him*] Who leaps for stars
 Must fall a million leagues too short, or else

Take vantage not of earth. [*Goes to curtains*]
Farewell—till death.

Aris. 'Twill not be long to wait. Thou canst not live
In Dion's arms.

Ara. Nor thine. As well to hope
The air-winged seed will root in vacancy,
And high mid-nothing hang with lobéd bloom,
As that the rose of love will flower from
The wreck of men and gods.

[*He kneels and kisses her robe. She goes out*]

Aris. Before I die
I've touched divinity.

[*As he rises a slave rushes in, rear, and kneels*]

Slave. My lord!

Aris. You serve
Lord Heraclides, do you not?

Slave. I do,
And know his heart—his traitor heart.

Aris. Speak, man.

Slave. You love the noble Dion?

Aris. [*Starts*] Dion? Ay,
I love him well.

Slave. Sir, Heraclides comes
To slay him. Dion, the good! But you will save him!
Ægisthus and Callorus aid my master.
They're bringing Dion here.

Aris. Here? Haste! Bring you
Ocrastes and Calippus! Freedom! Go!

[*Slave runs out. Aristocles steps back unseen as Dion,
Heraclides, Ægisthus and Callorus enter. The slave
running out meets them*]

Her. What do you, sirrah?

[*The slave runs by without answer*]

Go! You'll not outrun

The hangman!

[*Ægisthus and Callorus keep in rear of Heraclides, who walks with Dion*]

Æg. [To *Callorus*] We're betrayed.

Callo. [To *Heraclides*] Do not delay

The blow.

Her. [To *Dion*] You like our plan, my lord?

Æg. [To *Heraclides*] Strike now.

Dion. 'Tis balm to Syracuse. Your hand upon it,
And pardon me my left.

Her. With all my heart!

[*Stabs at Dion, whose sword arm is still in bandage. Aristocles, watching, springs out and knocks the weapon aside. Heraclides engages with him. Callorus rushes at Dion, who has loosened his right arm, and his foe, meeting unexpected defence, is slain. As Callorus falls, Ægisthus strikes at Dion and disarms him, sending his weapon against the curtains, left. Dion, unarmed and suffering, falls back. Aristocles presses before Dion, fighting desperately with Heraclides and Ægisthus. Aratea appears at curtains*]

Ara. [Taking up *Dion's* weapon] O heart of Mars,
beat here!

[*She advances suddenly and draws upon Ægisthus, who falls back in momentary astonishment, and Aristocles, relieved, slays Heraclides. Ocrastes and Calippus rush in rear, followed by guards and slaves. Theano and women, enter left. Ægisthus kneels and surrenders his sword to Aratea*]

Cal. No mercy now!

[To guards] To prison with Ægisthus!

[*Guards lead off Ægisthus*]

Oc. Dion! Safe?

Dion. [Rising] My wife—and friend—can tell you.
Ask of them.

Oc. [Picking up bandage] My lord, your scarf.

Dion. Let 't be, my son. Let 't be.
I shall not need it any more.

Oc. O joy,
My lord!

Cal. And joy for Heraclides' death!

Aris. Poor man! His flattery so soon found friends
That he himself was caught by it, and thought
To gain a crown by Dion's death. E'en while
They talked—O ne'er was friendly speech so punctured—
His sword was out and aimed at Dion's bosom.

Oc. Your blade is purple, but it should be black,
So vile his blood! [*Dion sinks to a seat*]

Cal. My lord!

Oc. Your wound! He bleeds!
O see! This stream is gushing as 'twould fill
An ocean. Help! A surgeon!

Dion. Nay, too late.
Olympus' power alone is potent here.
There's not enough of life in me to wish
For life.

Ara. O, Dion!

Dion. Kneel here, my wife.
[*Aratea kneels at Dion's side*]

And you,
Aristocles, come close to me.
[*Aristocles kneels on the other side of Dion*]

Two faces

Where more of heaven is writ than I have seen
In all the world beside. Ay, ye will pair
Like twin divinities, and haply by
The sweet conjunction of your beauteous stars
Make a new influence in the skies may draw
The world to heaven.

. . . Ocrastes, son, on you
Now falls the heavy weight of government.

. . . Farewell, all hearts. My way is new and long,
And strange may be the fortunes of my shade,
But somewhere I shall lay me down in peace,
For death's unmeasured sea must own a strand,
And e'en eternity beat to a shore.

[*Dies. Curtain*]

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